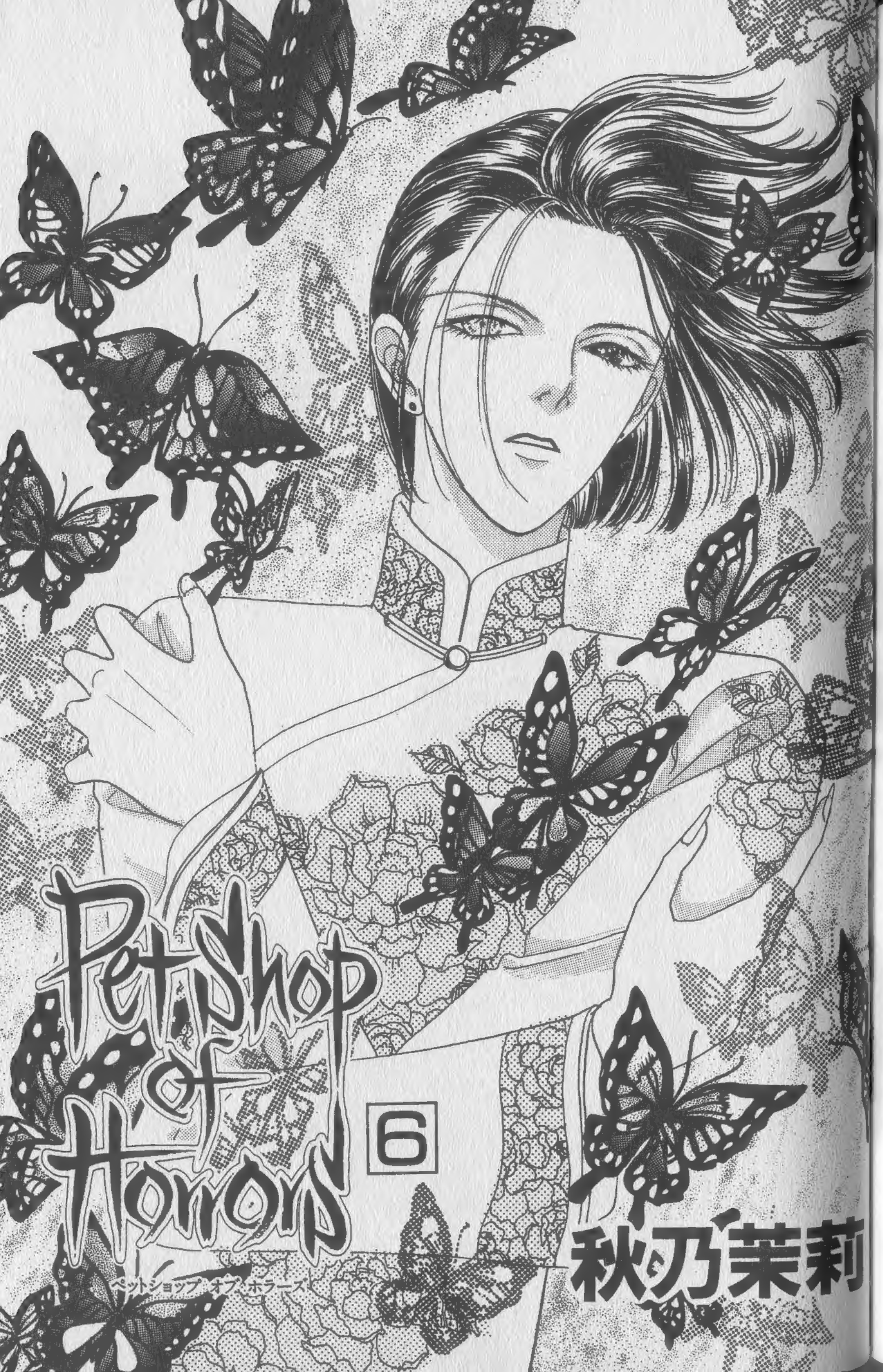
Pet Shop of Horrors
6
ペットショップ・オブ・ホラーズ
秋乃茉莉

ISBN 1591825032
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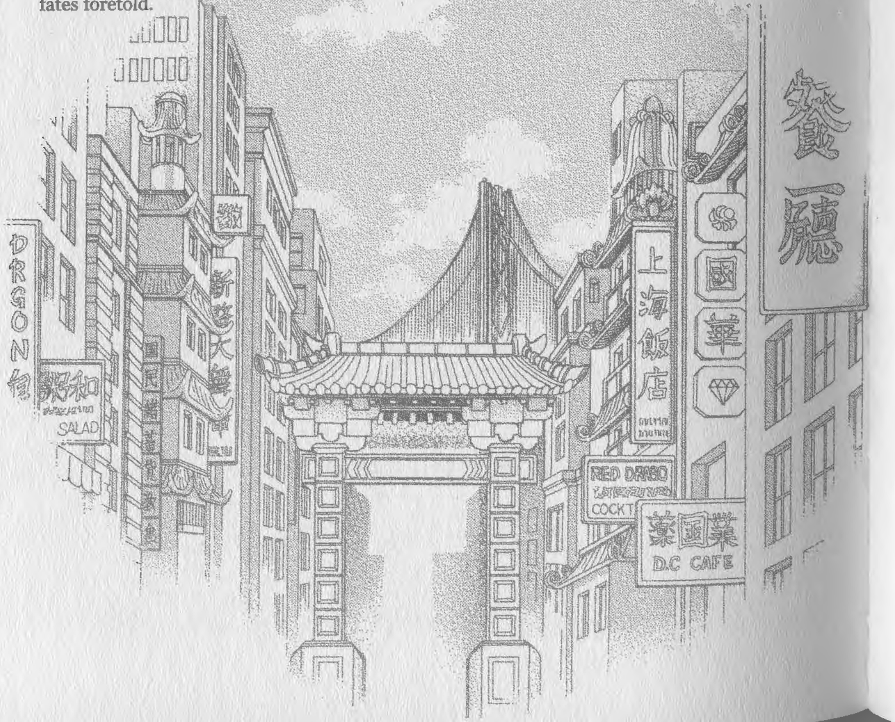
The Story so far

Plumes of mist billow up from the back alleys of Chinatown, home to a variety of merchants of the occult and mystical. And in the crevices of this urban barrio sits a solitary pet shop. Its proprietor, an enigmatic figure known as Count D, beckons through his doors the injured and the scarred, introducing them to creatures wondrous and bizarre.

Our guide through this mysterious landscape is one Detective Leon Orcot who has traced a series of seemingly unrelated crimes to Count D and his Pet Shop of Horrors. A steadfast skeptic, Leon dismisses as trickery the inexplicable events he witnesses. But in his continual attempts to prove D's guilt, this hard-boiled dick inevitably finds himself enraptured by the illusions around him.

The detective, therefore, has formed a strange friendship with his suspect. And as the bond between the two thickens, one must question who has the upper hand. Is the Count playing into the detective's hands, or is it the other way around? Now, the veils of secrecy are slowly being withdrawn...the hidden truths of the detective and the dark secrets of the Count are soon to be revealed.

Prepare yourselves now for four tales of wonder and woe in which lessons are learned and fates foretold.



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A TOKYOPOP® Manga

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Petshop of Horrors Vol. 6

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First published in Japan in 1997 by Ohzora Publishing Co. Tokyo, Japan.
English publication rights arranged through Ohzora Comic Creation Co., Ltd.

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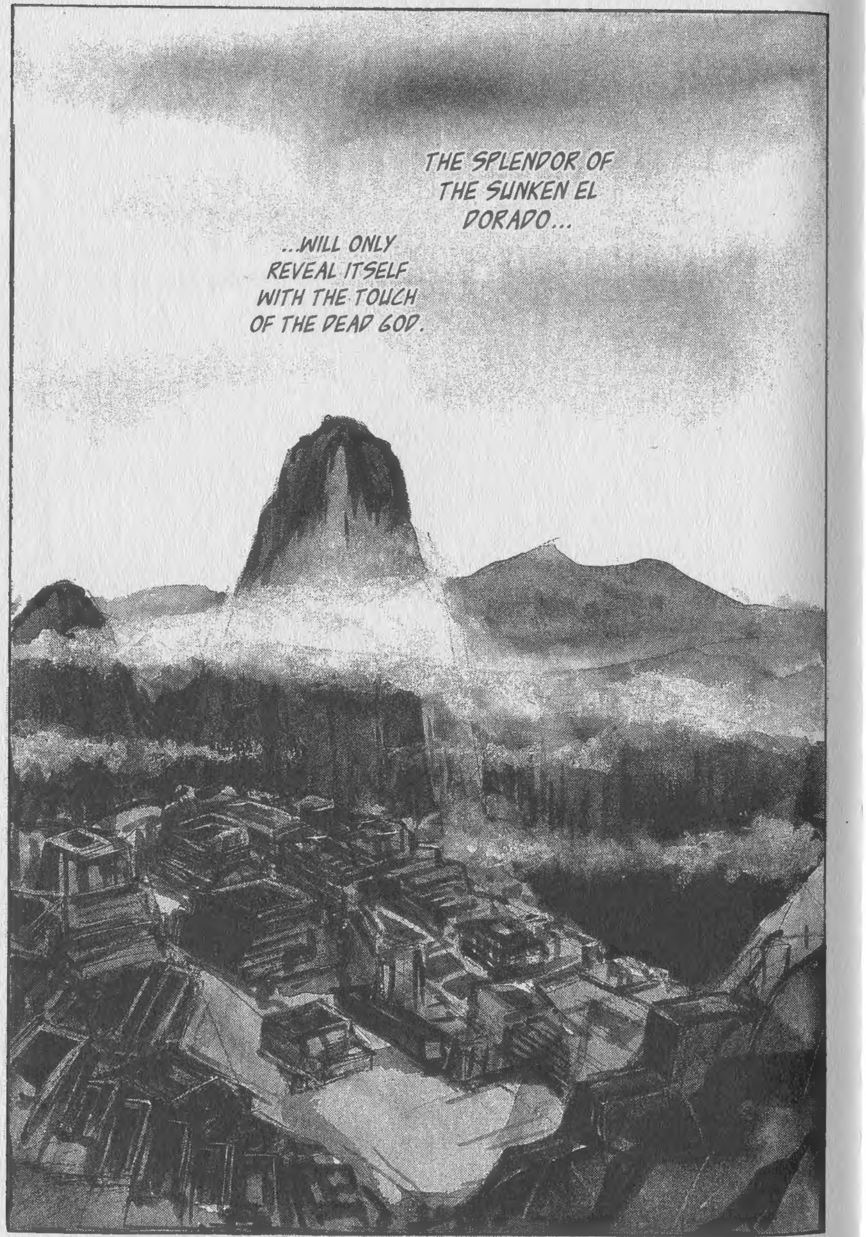
ISBN: 1-59182-503-2

First TOKYOPOP printing: May 2004

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the USA


THE SPLENDOR OF THE SUNKEN EL DORADO...
...WILL ONLY REVEAL ITSELF WITH THE TOUCH OF THE DEAD GOD.

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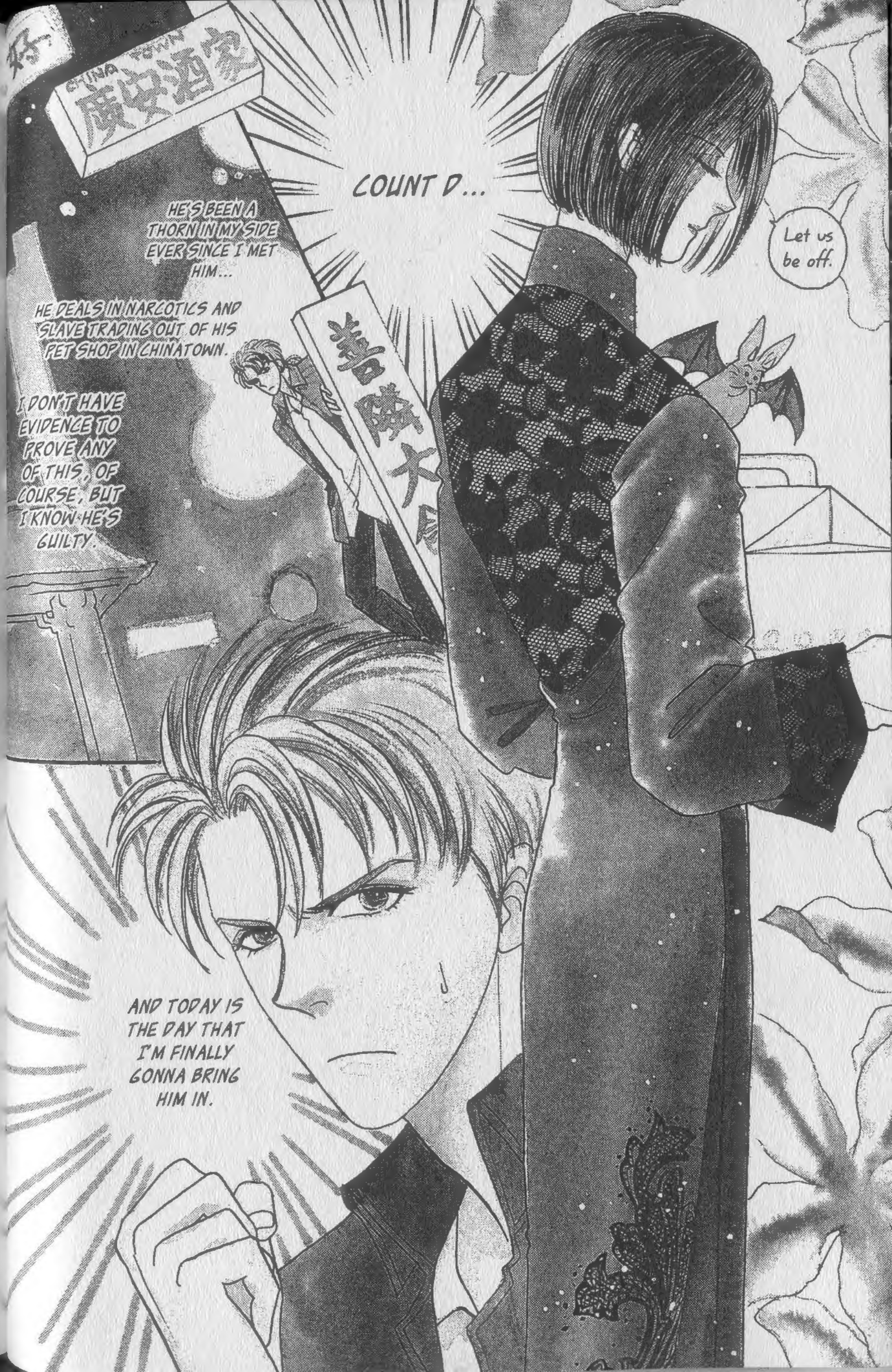
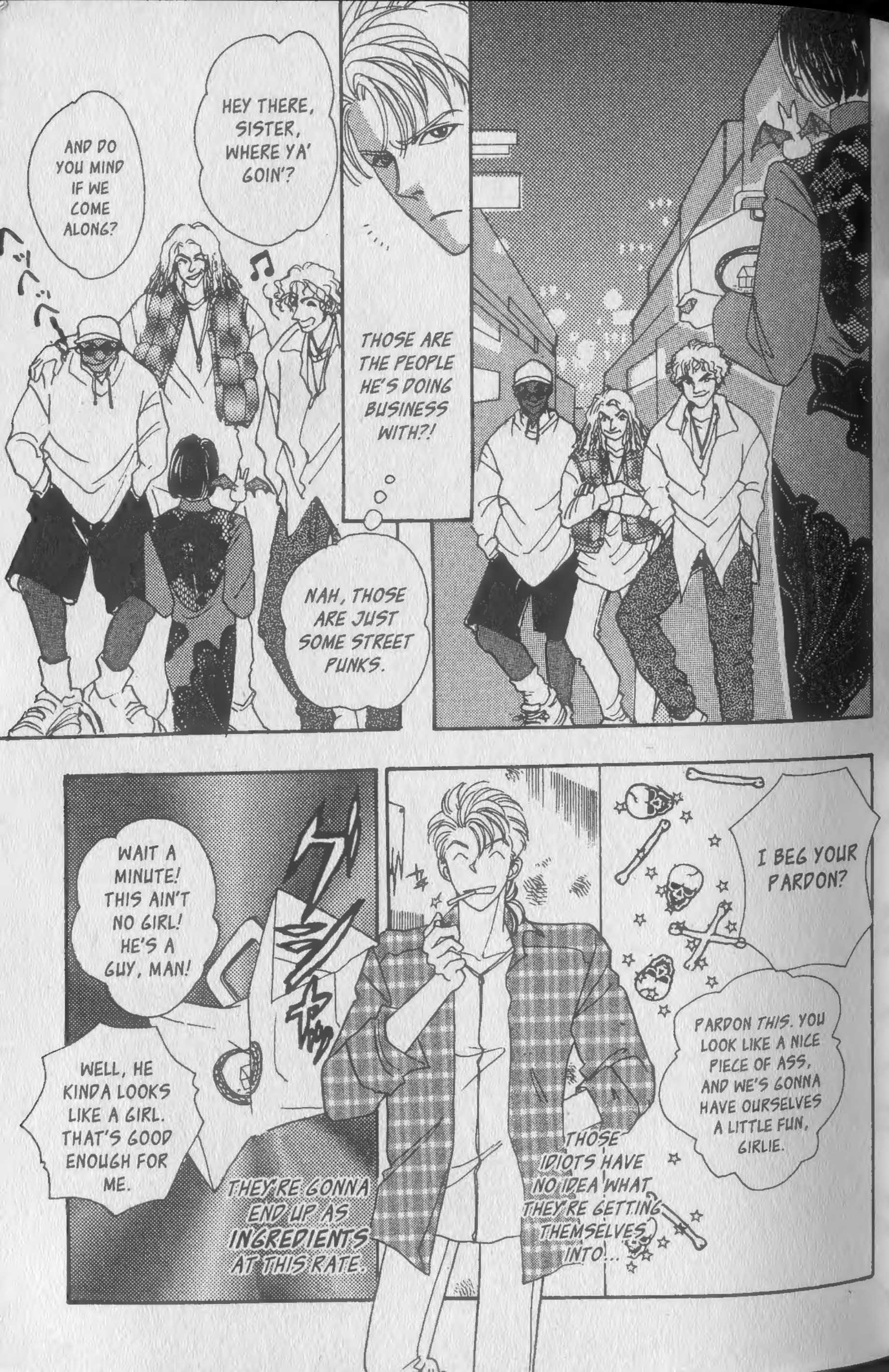
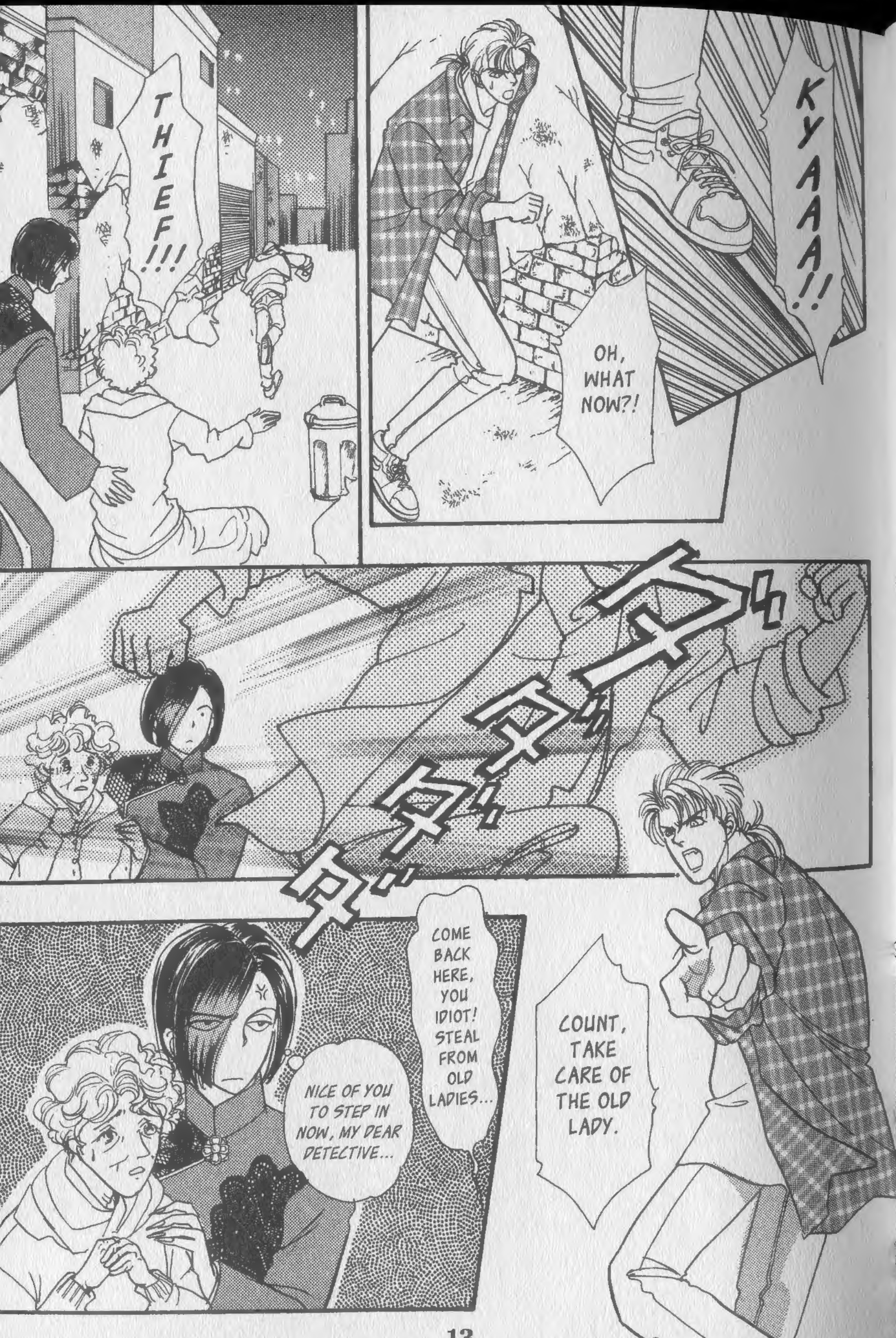
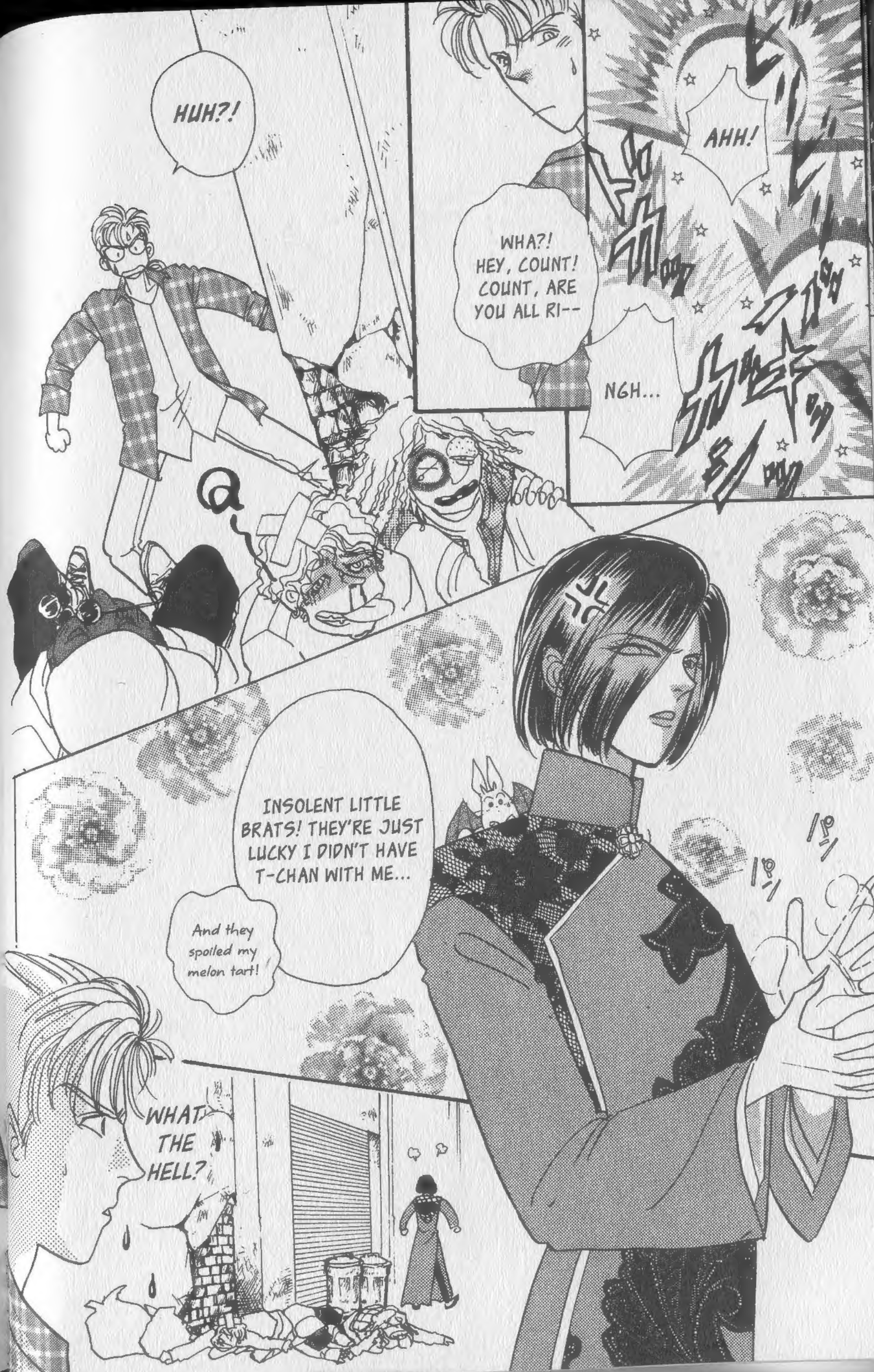
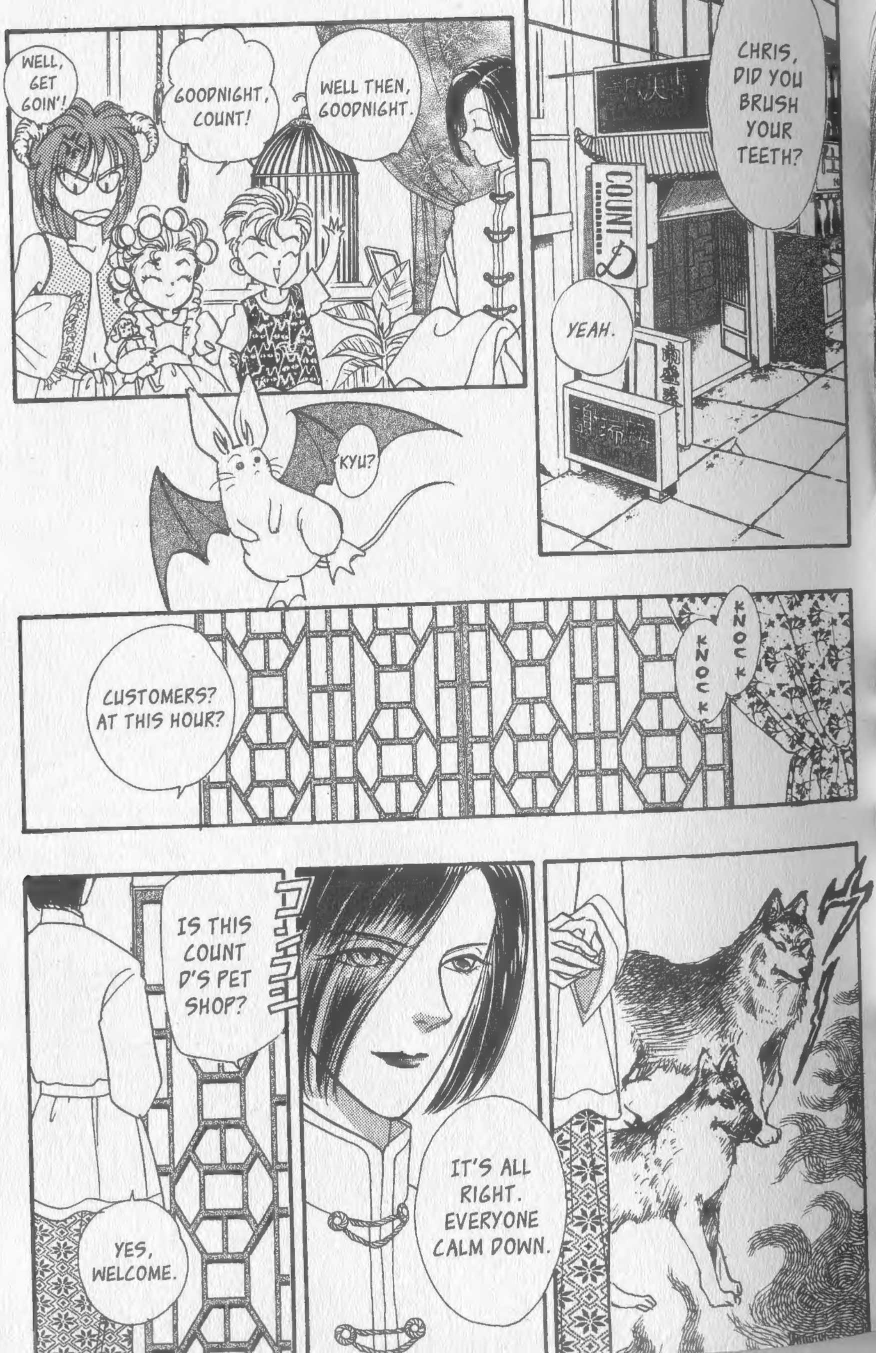
Pet Shop of Horrors
ペットショップ オブ ホラーズ
第1話／Discovery

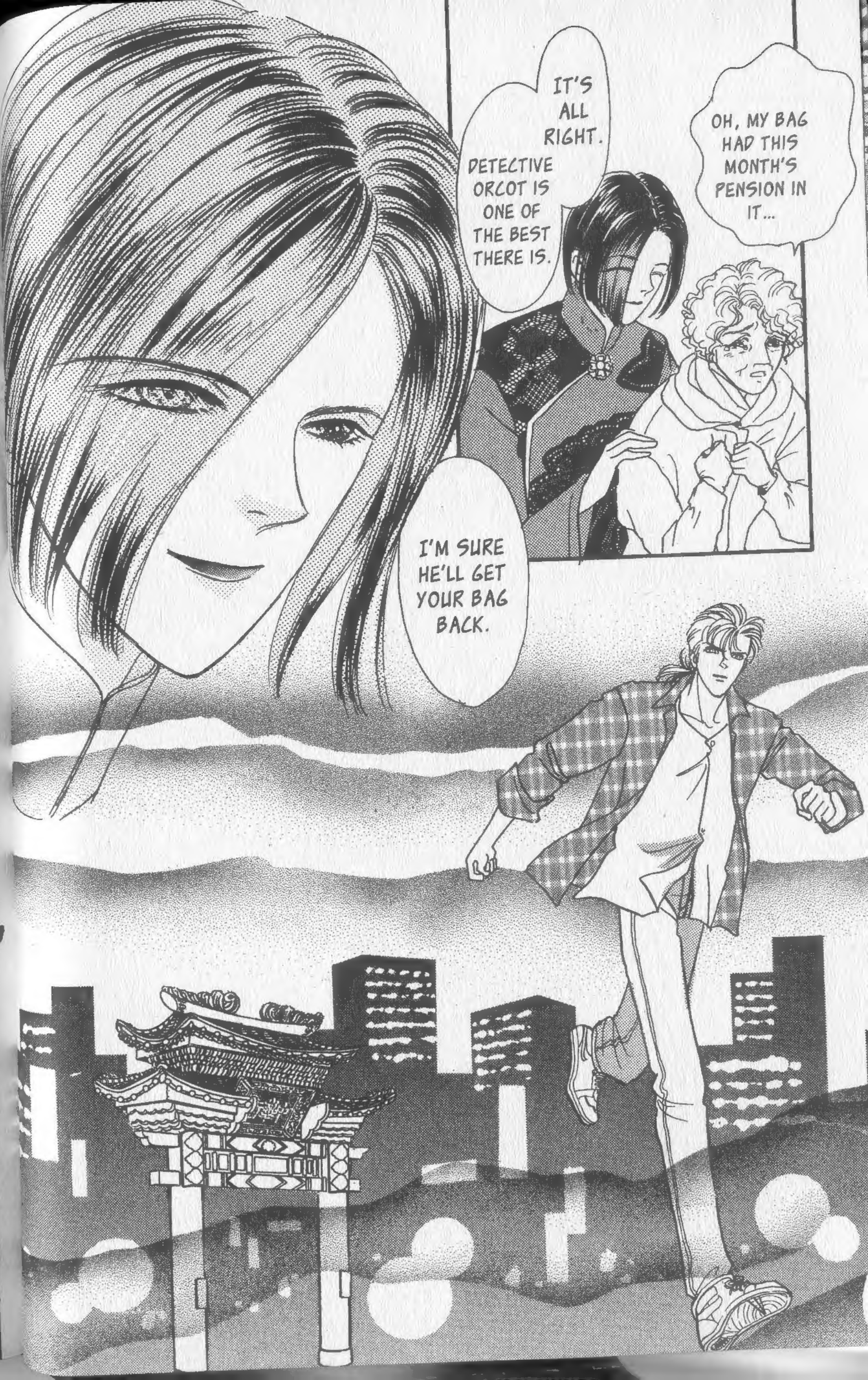

Let us be off.
COUNT D...
CHINA TOWN
廣安酒家
HE'S BEEN A THORN IN MY SIDE EVER SINCE I MET HIM...
HE DEALS IN NARCOTICS AND SLAVE TRADING OUT OF HIS PET SHOP IN CHINATOWN.
善隣大
I DON'T HAVE EVIDENCE TO PROVE ANY OF THIS, OF COURSE, BUT I KNOW HE'S GUILTY.
AND TODAY IS THE DAY THAT I'M FINALLY GONNA BRING HIM IN.

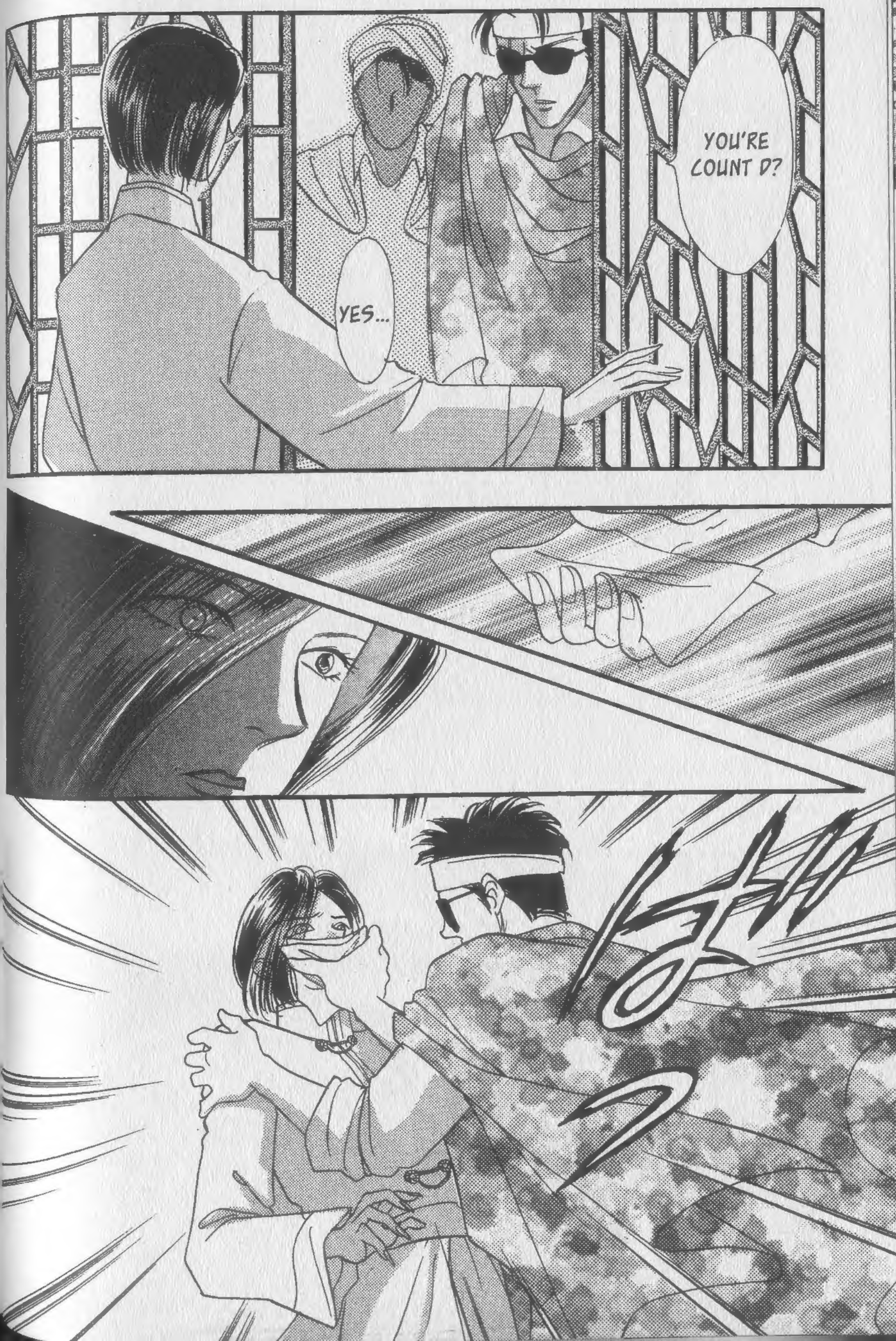

THOSE ARE THE PEOPLE HE'S DOING BUSINESS WITH?!
NAH, THOSE ARE JUST SOME STREET PUNKS.
HEY THERE, SISTER, WHERE YA' GOIN'?
AND DO YOU MIND IF WE COME ALONG?
I BEG YOUR PARDON?
PARDON THIS. YOU LOOK LIKE A NICE PIECE OF ASS, AND WE'S GONNA HAVE OURSELVES A LITTLE FUN, GIRLIE.
THOSE IDIOTS HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY'RE GETTING THEMSELVES INTO...
THEY'RE GONNA END UP AS INGREDIENTS AT THIS RATE.
WAIT A MINUTE! THIS AIN'T NO GIRL! HE'S A GUY, MAN!
WELL, HE KINDA LOOKS LIKE A GIRL. THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

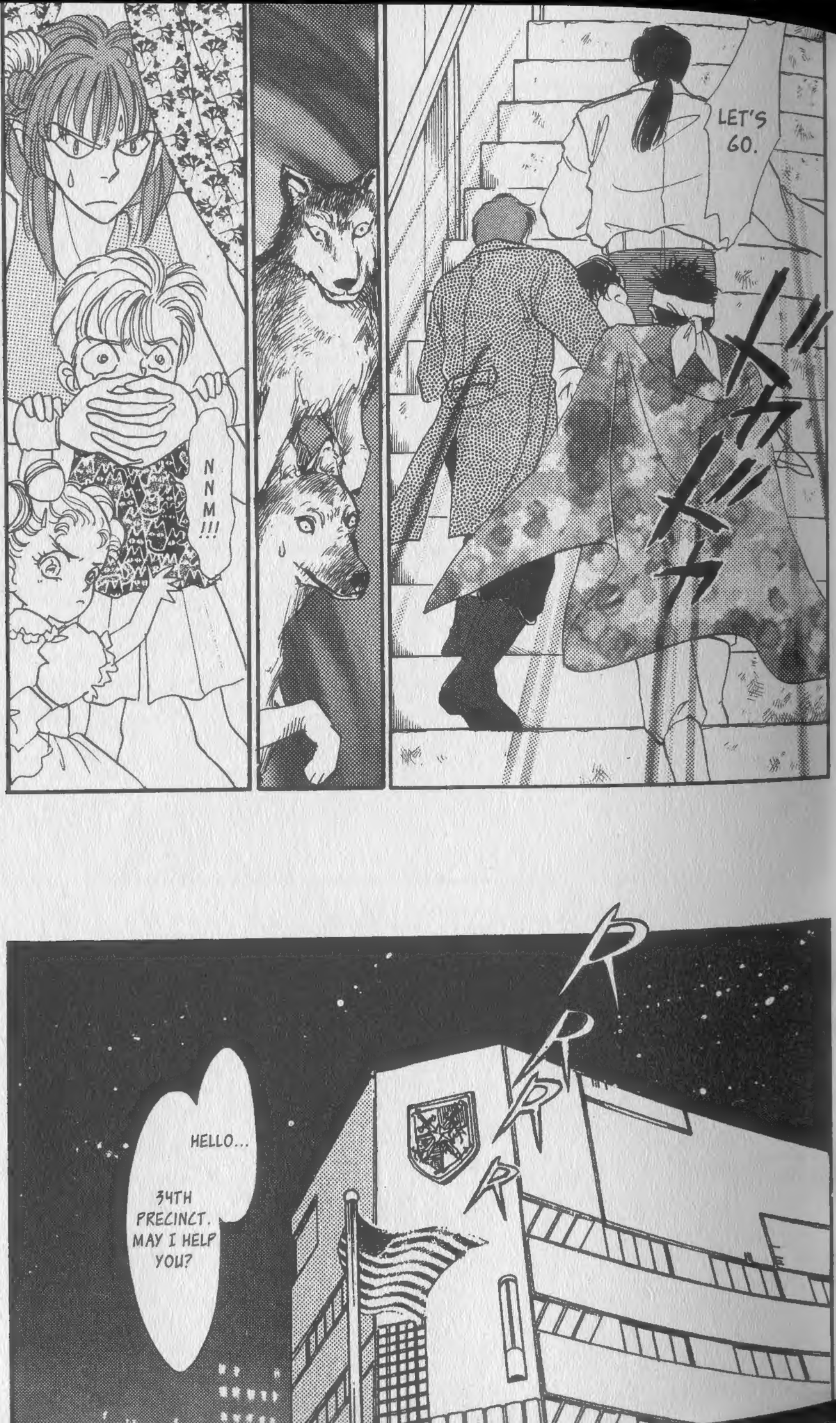

THIEF!!!
OH, WHAT NOW?!
KYAAAA!!
ダダダダ
COME BACK HERE, YOU IDIOT! STEAL FROM OLD LADIES...
COUNT, TAKE CARE OF THE OLD LADY.
NICE OF YOU TO STEP IN NOW, MY DEAR DETECTIVE...

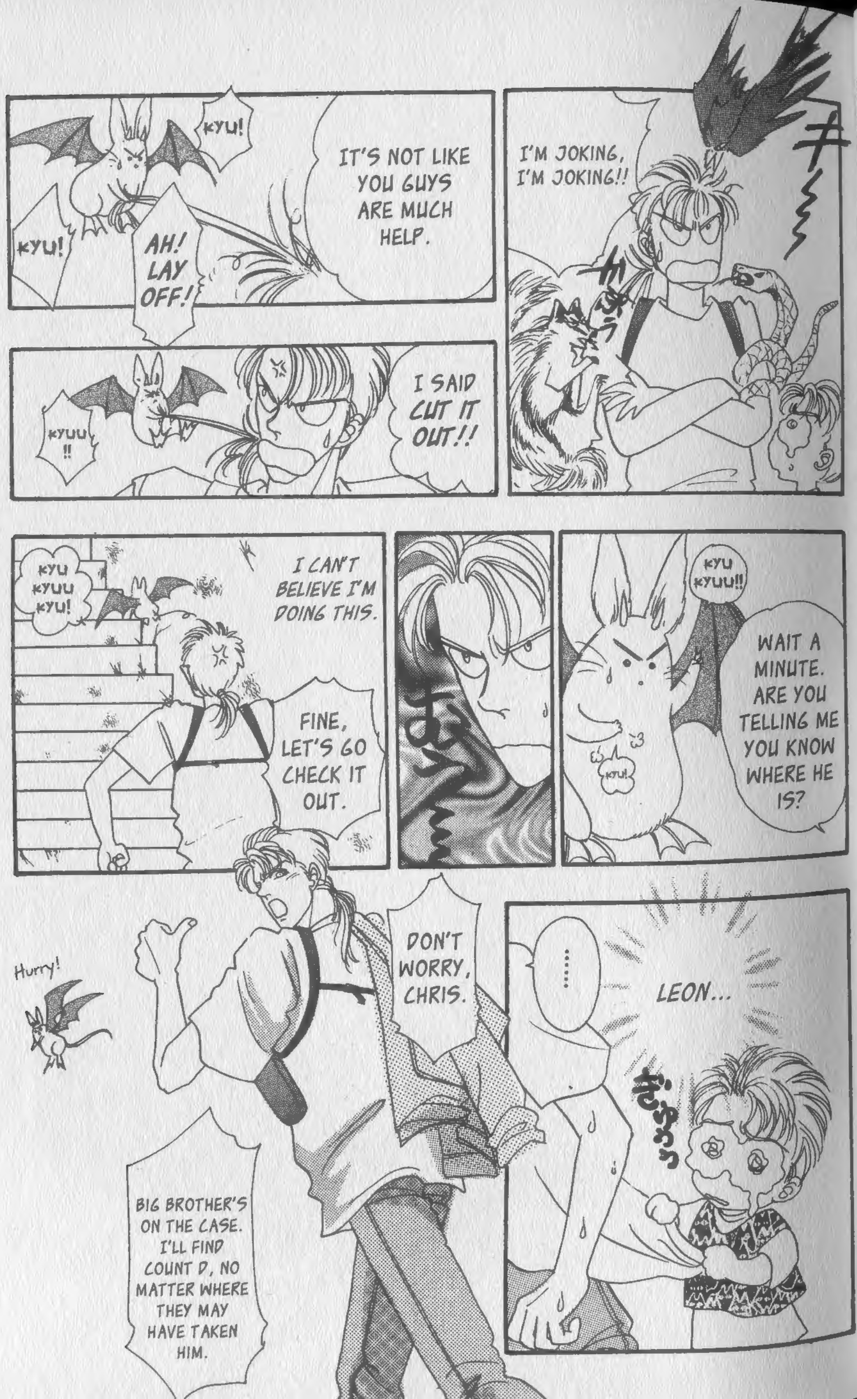

HUH?!
WHA?! HEY, COUNT! COUNT, ARE YOU ALL RI--
AHH!
NGH...
INSOLENT LITTLE BRATS! THEY'RE JUST LUCKY I DIDN'T HAVE T-CHAN WITH ME...
And they spoiled my melon tart!
WHAT THE HELL?

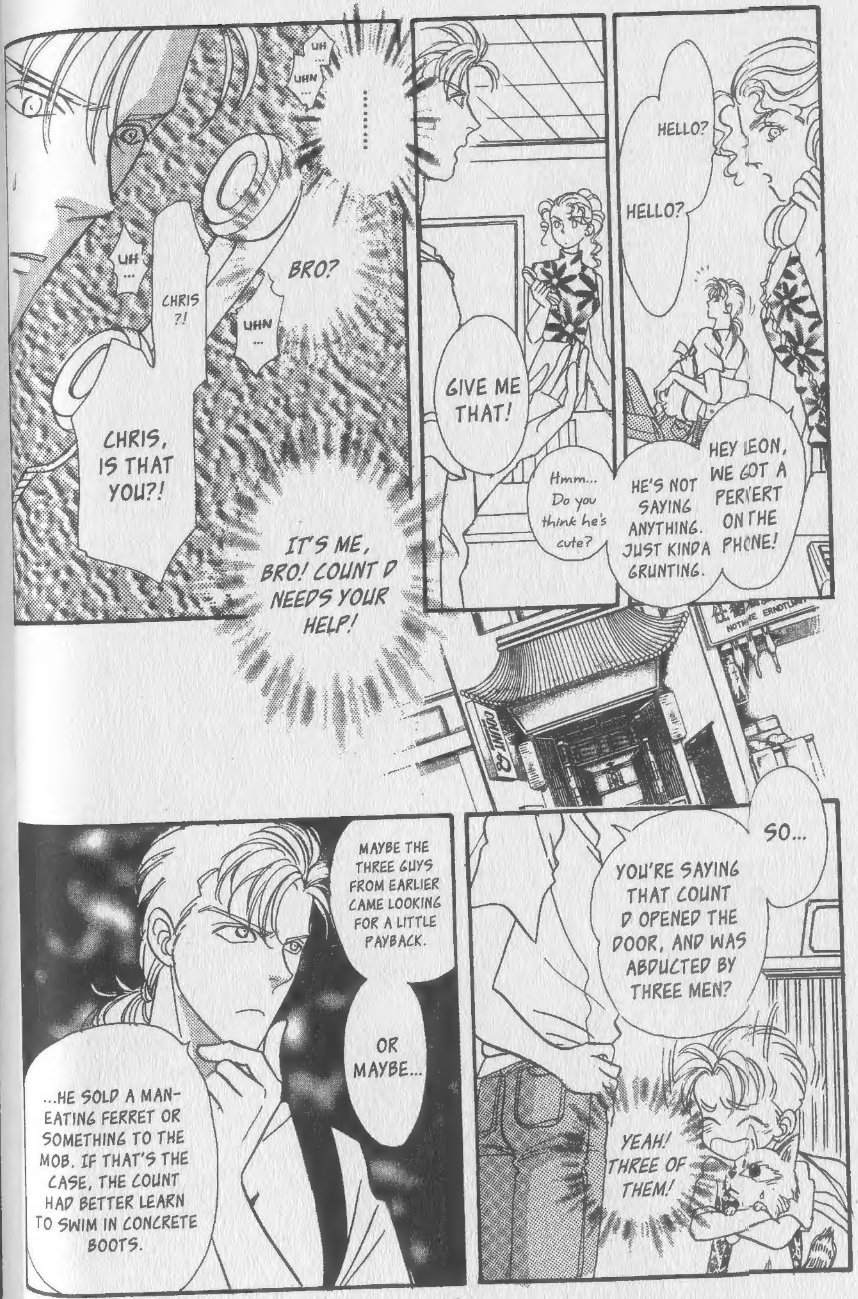

WELL, GET GOIN'!
GOODNIGHT, COUNT!
WELL THEN, GOODNIGHT.
CHRIS, DID YOU BRUSH YOUR TEETH?
COUNT D
YEAH.
KYU?
CUSTOMERS? AT THIS HOUR?
KNOCK KNOCK
IS THIS COUNT D'S PET SHOP?
YES, WELCOME.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. EVERYONE CALM DOWN.

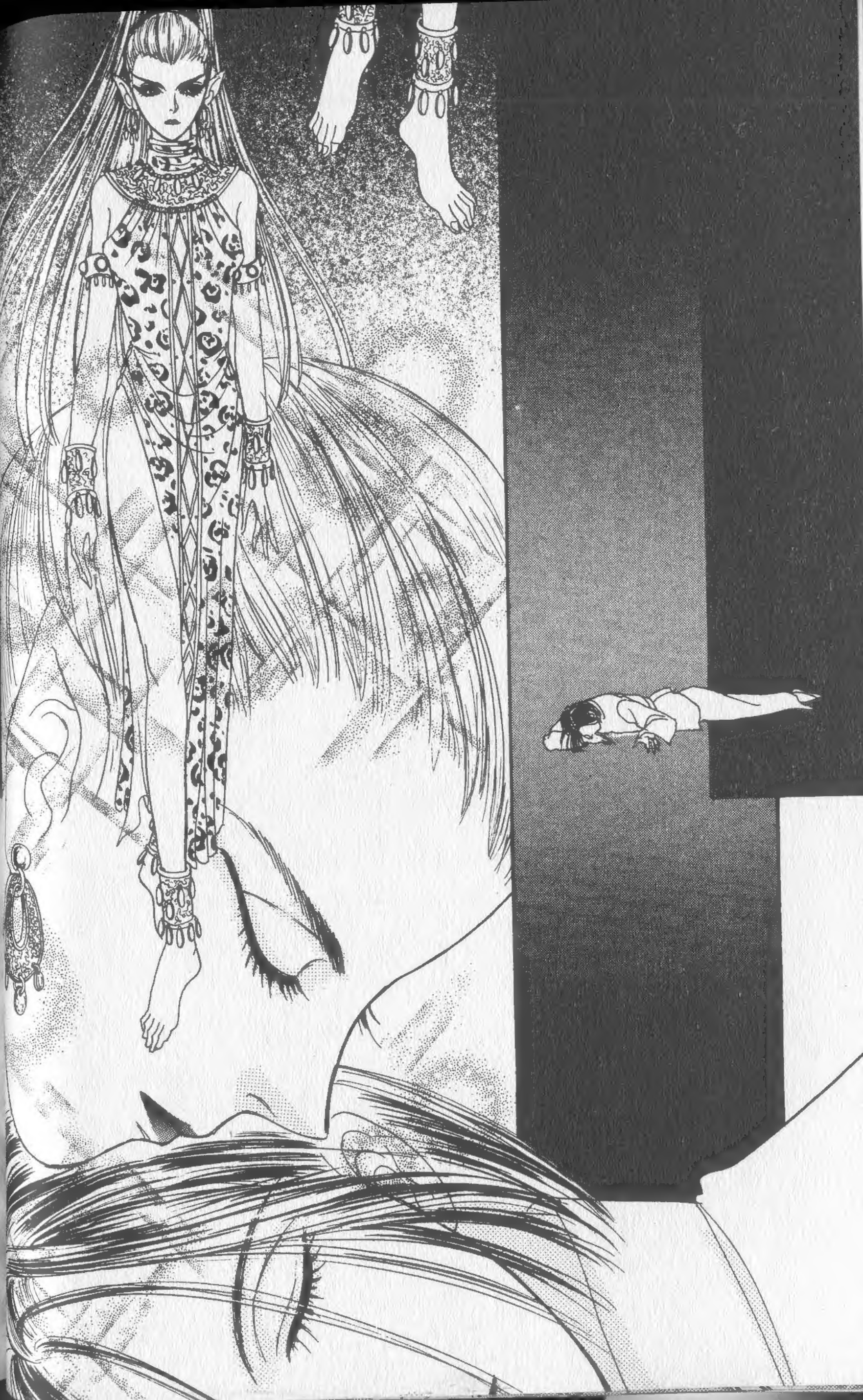

OH, MY BAG HAD THIS MONTH'S PENSION IN IT...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
DETECTIVE ORCOT IS ONE OF THE BEST THERE IS.
I'M SURE HE'LL GET YOUR BAG BACK.

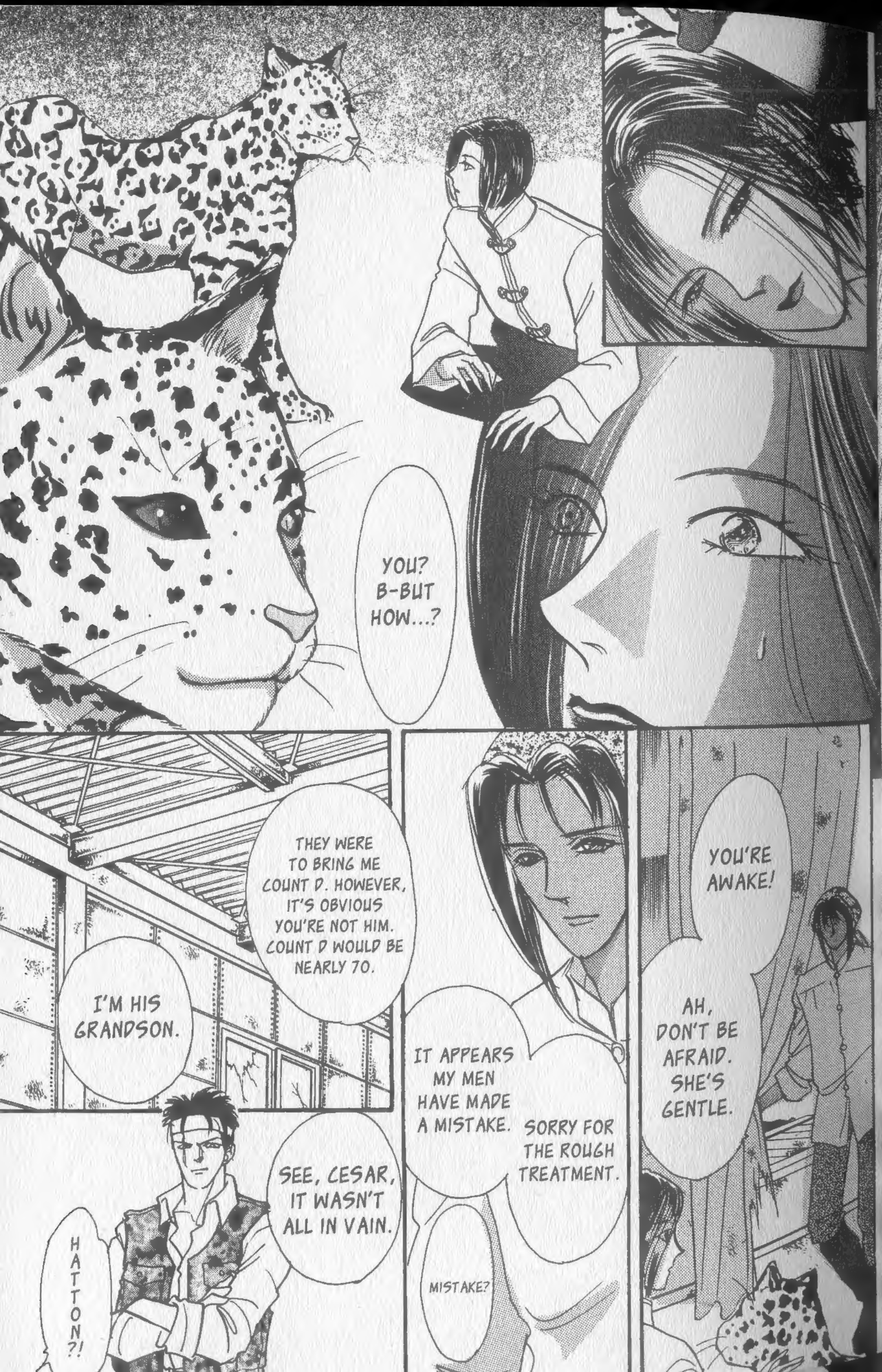

YOU'RE COUNT D?
YES...

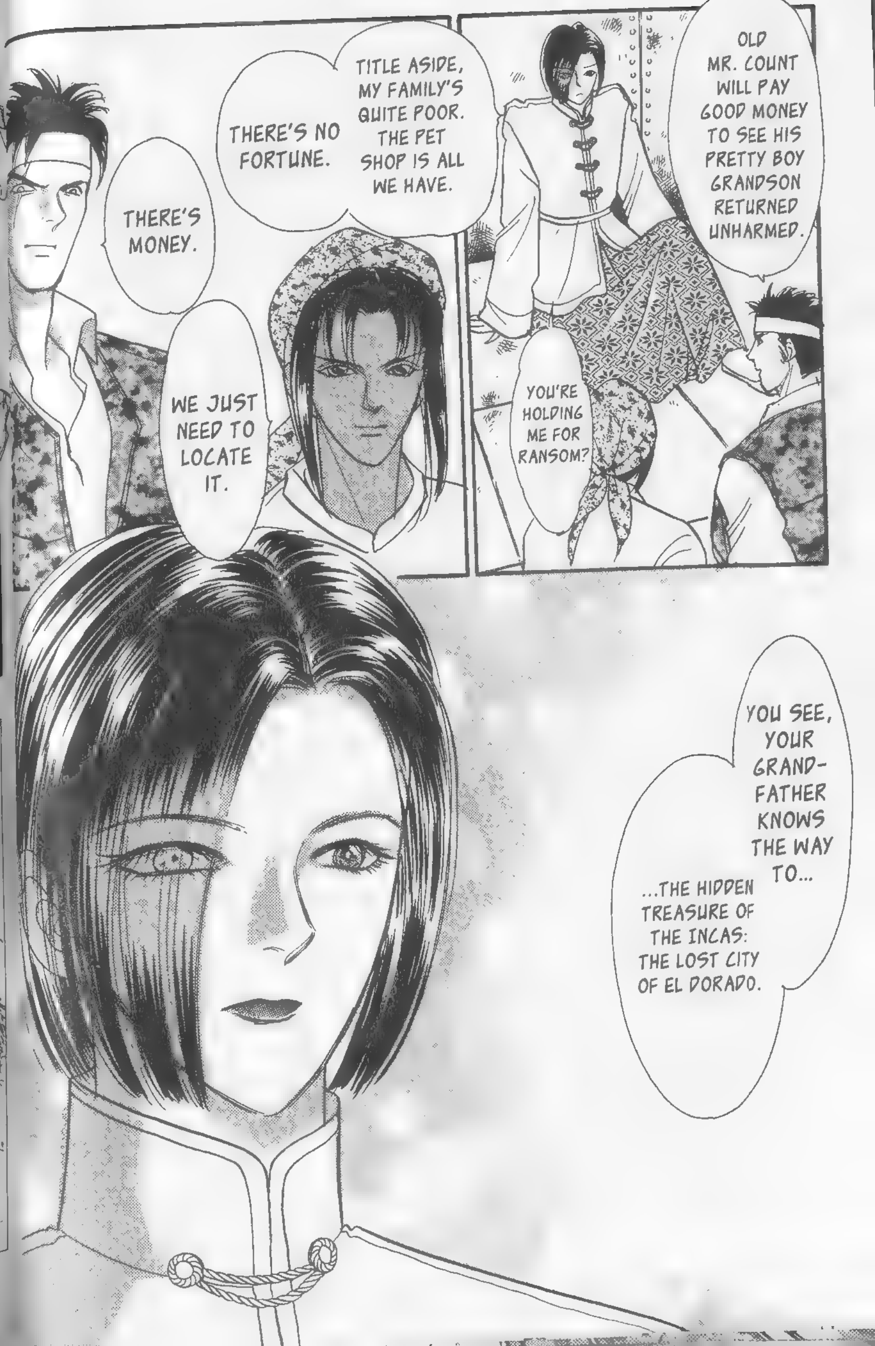

LET'S GO.
NNM!!!
RRRR
HELLO...
34TH PRECINCT. MAY I HELP YOU?

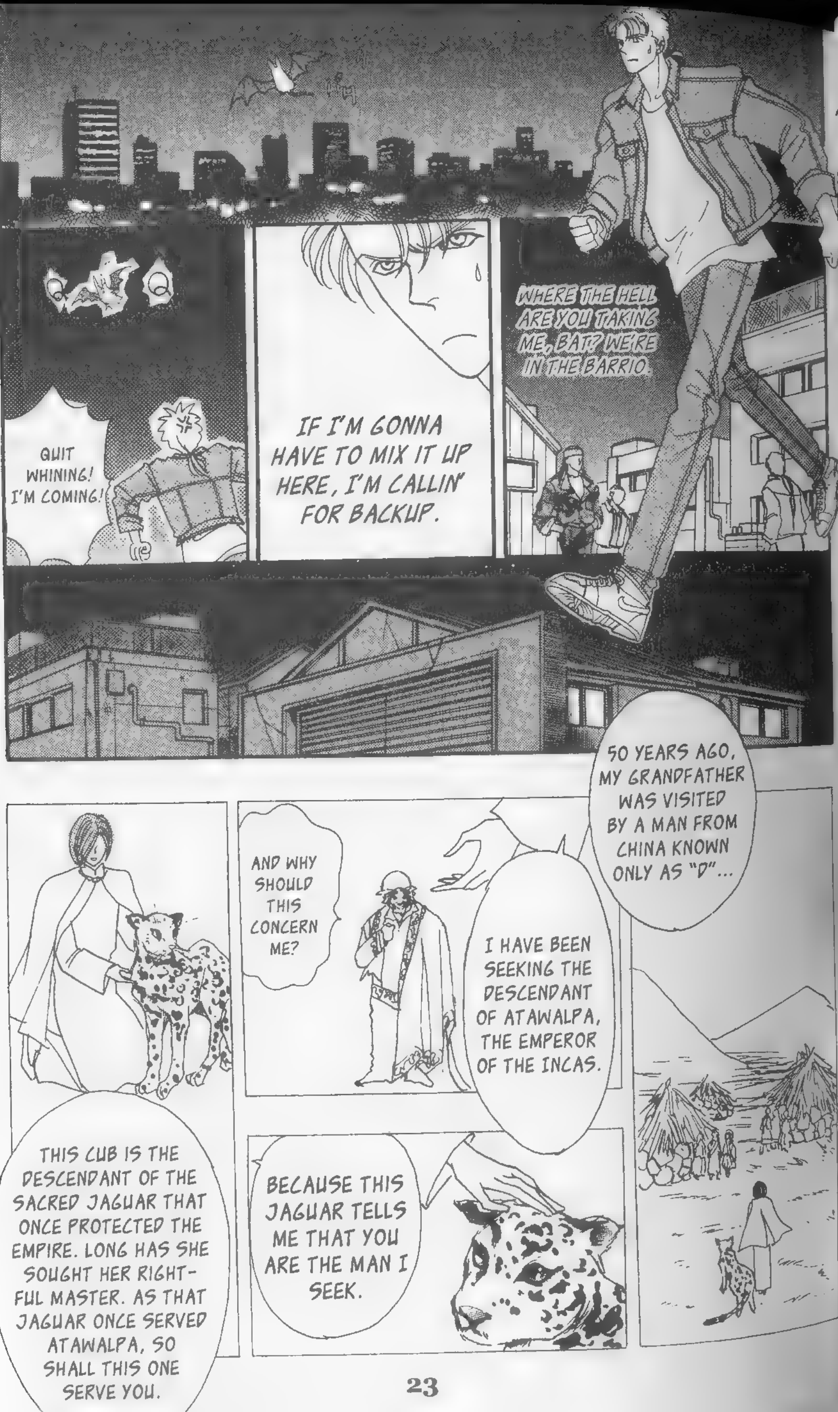

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU GUYS ARE MUCH HELP.
KYU!
KYU!
AH! LAY OFF!
I SAID CUT IT OUT!!
KYUU !!
I'M JOKING, I'M JOKING!!
KYU KYUU!!
WAIT A MINUTE. ARE YOU TELLING ME YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS?
KYU!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M DOING THIS.
KYU KYUU KYU!
FINE, LET'S GO CHECK IT OUT.
LEON...
......
DON'T WORRY, CHRIS.
BIG BROTHER'S ON THE CASE. I'LL FIND COUNT D, NO MATTER WHERE THEY MAY HAVE TAKEN HIM.
Hurry!

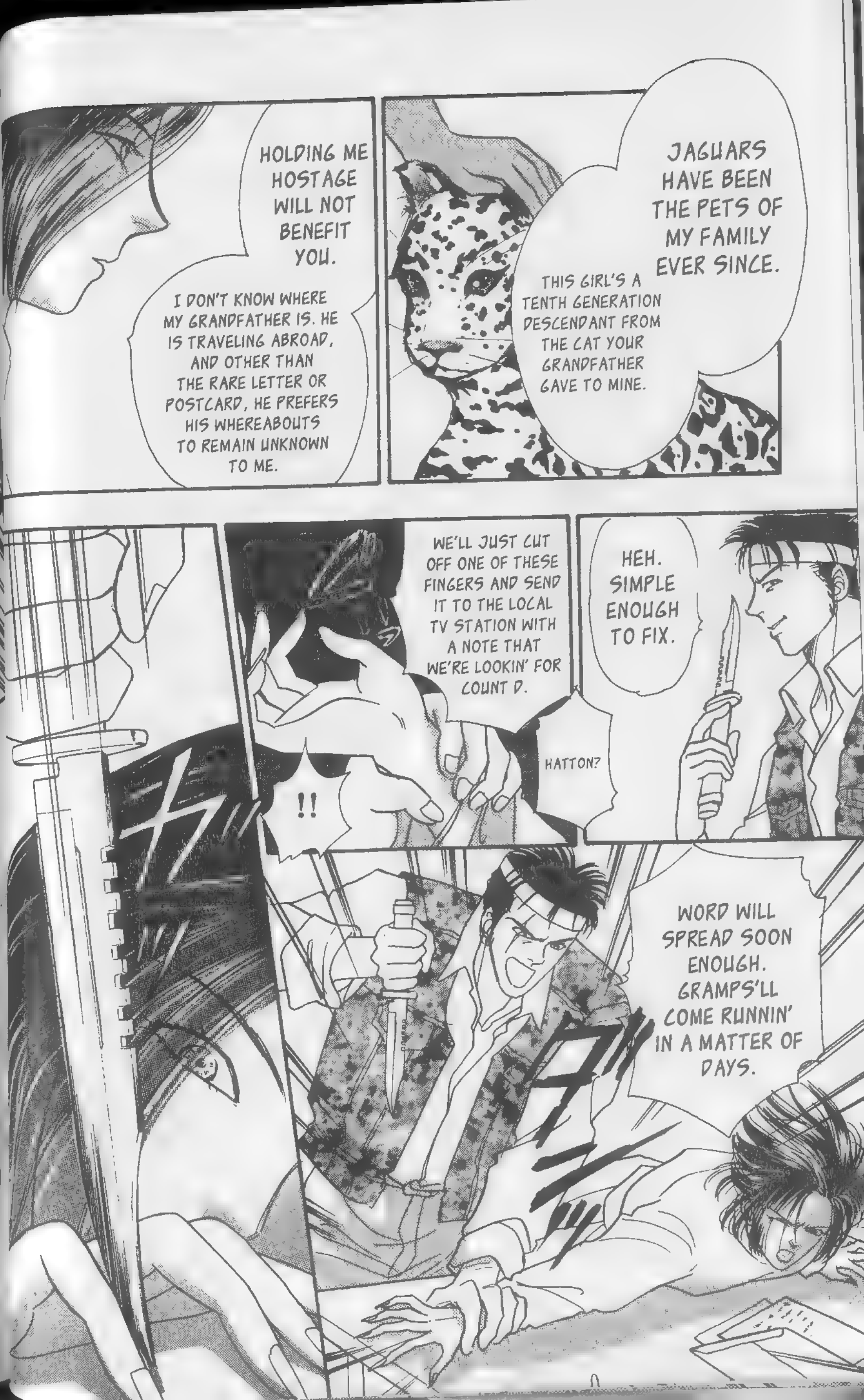

HELLO?
HELLO?
HEY LEON, WE GOT A PERVERT ON THE PHONE!
HE'S NOT SAYING ANYTHING. JUST KINDA GRUNTING.
Hmm... Do you think he's cute?
GIVE ME THAT!
UH ...
UHN ...
......
BRO?
UH ...
CHRIS ?!
UHN ...
CHRIS, IS THAT YOU?!
IT'S ME, BRO! COUNT D NEEDS YOUR HELP!
SO...
YOU'RE SAYING THAT COUNT D OPENED THE DOOR, AND WAS ABDUCTED BY THREE MEN?
YEAH! THREE OF THEM!
MAYBE THE THREE GUYS FROM EARLIER CAME LOOKING FOR A LITTLE PAYBACK.
OR MAYBE...
...HE SOLD A MAN-EATING FERRET OR SOMETHING TO THE MOB. IF THAT'S THE CASE, THE COUNT HAD BETTER LEARN TO SWIM IN CONCRETE BOOTS.

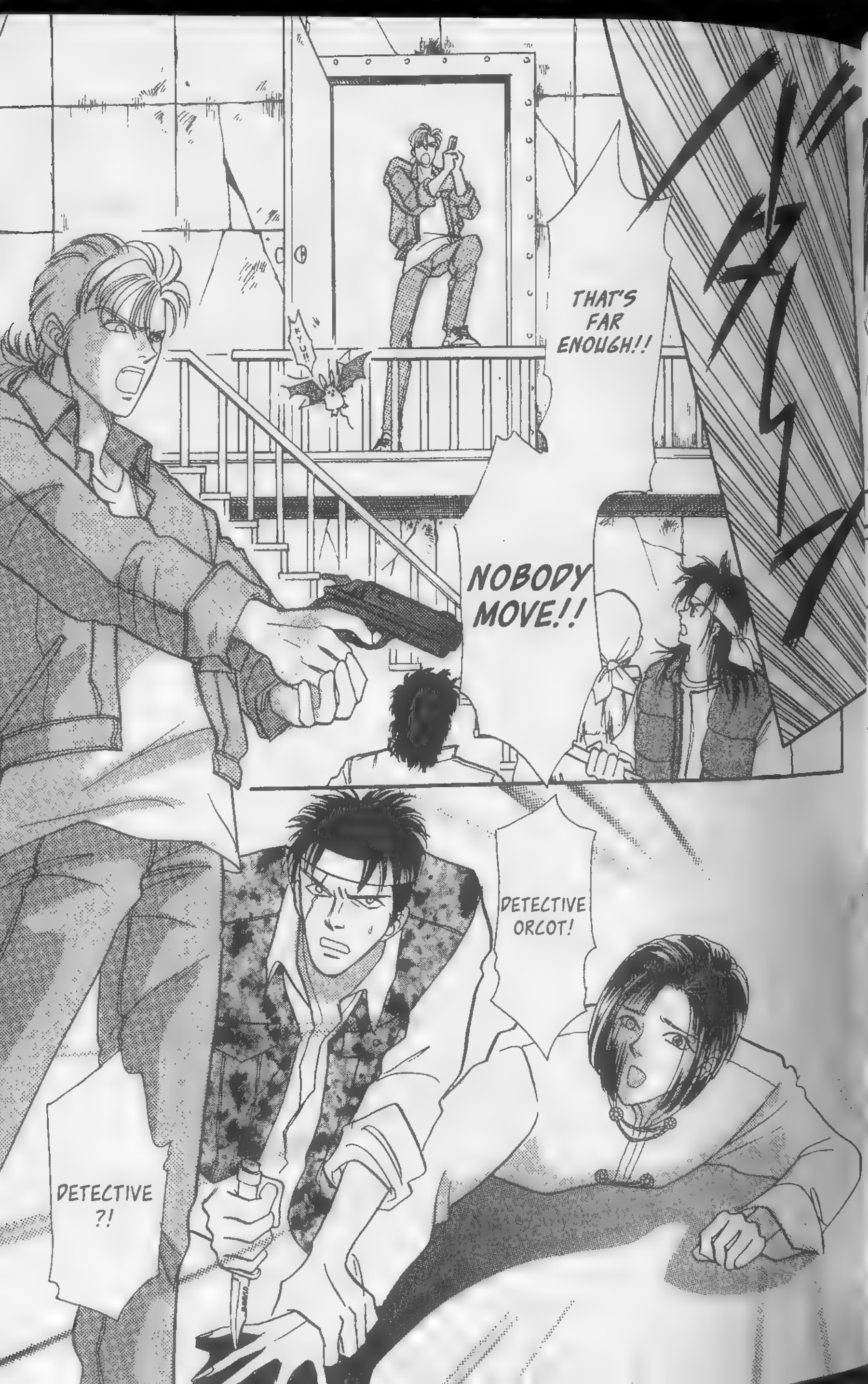


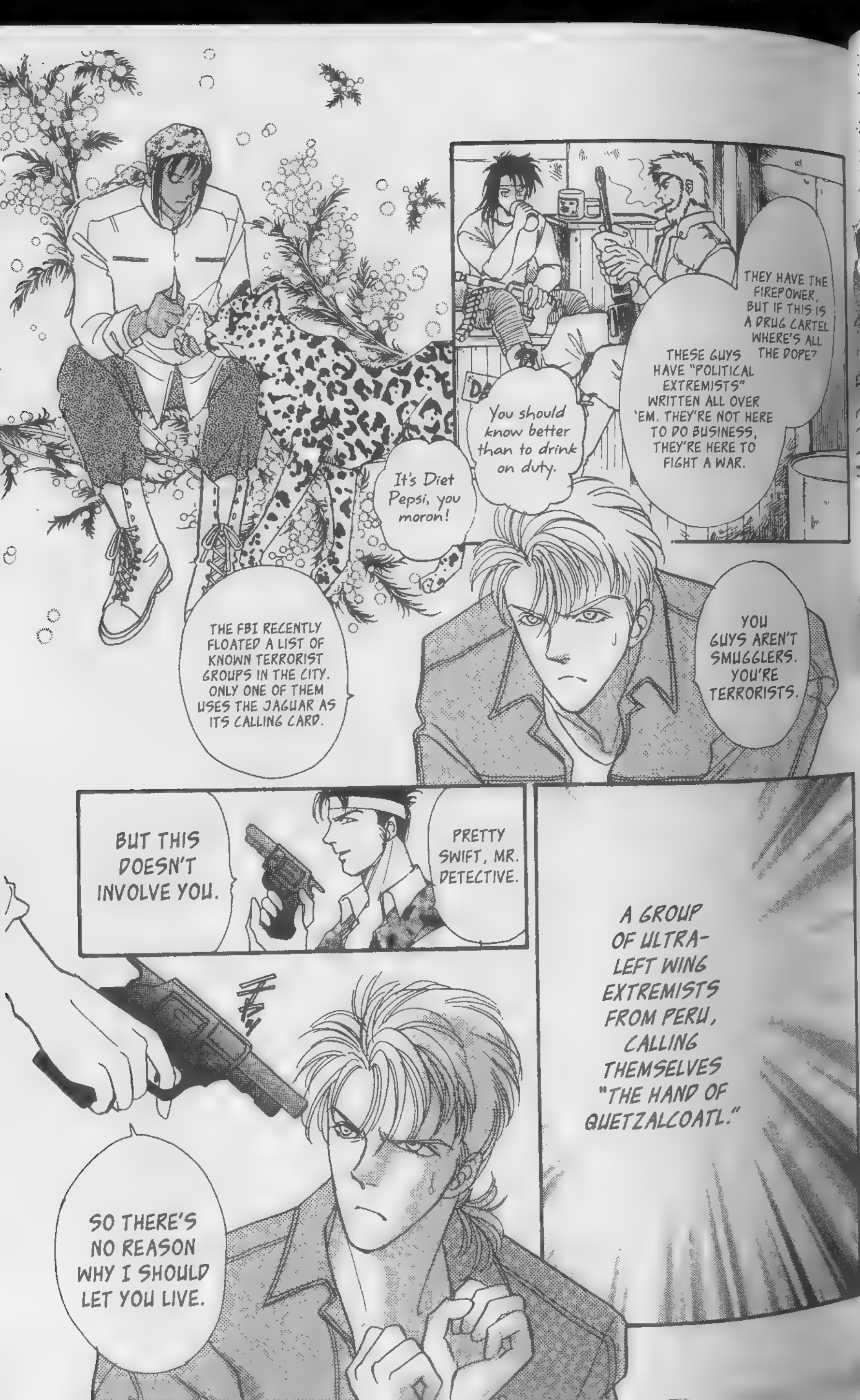

YOU? B-BUT HOW...?
YOU'RE AWAKE!
AH, DON'T BE AFRAID. SHE'S GENTLE.
IT APPEARS MY MEN HAVE MADE A MISTAKE.
SORRY FOR THE ROUGH TREATMENT.
MISTAKE?
THEY WERE TO BRING ME COUNT D. HOWEVER, IT'S OBVIOUS YOU'RE NOT HIM. COUNT D WOULD BE NEARLY 70.
I'M HIS GRANDSON.
SEE, CESAR, IT WASN'T ALL IN VAIN.
HATTON?!

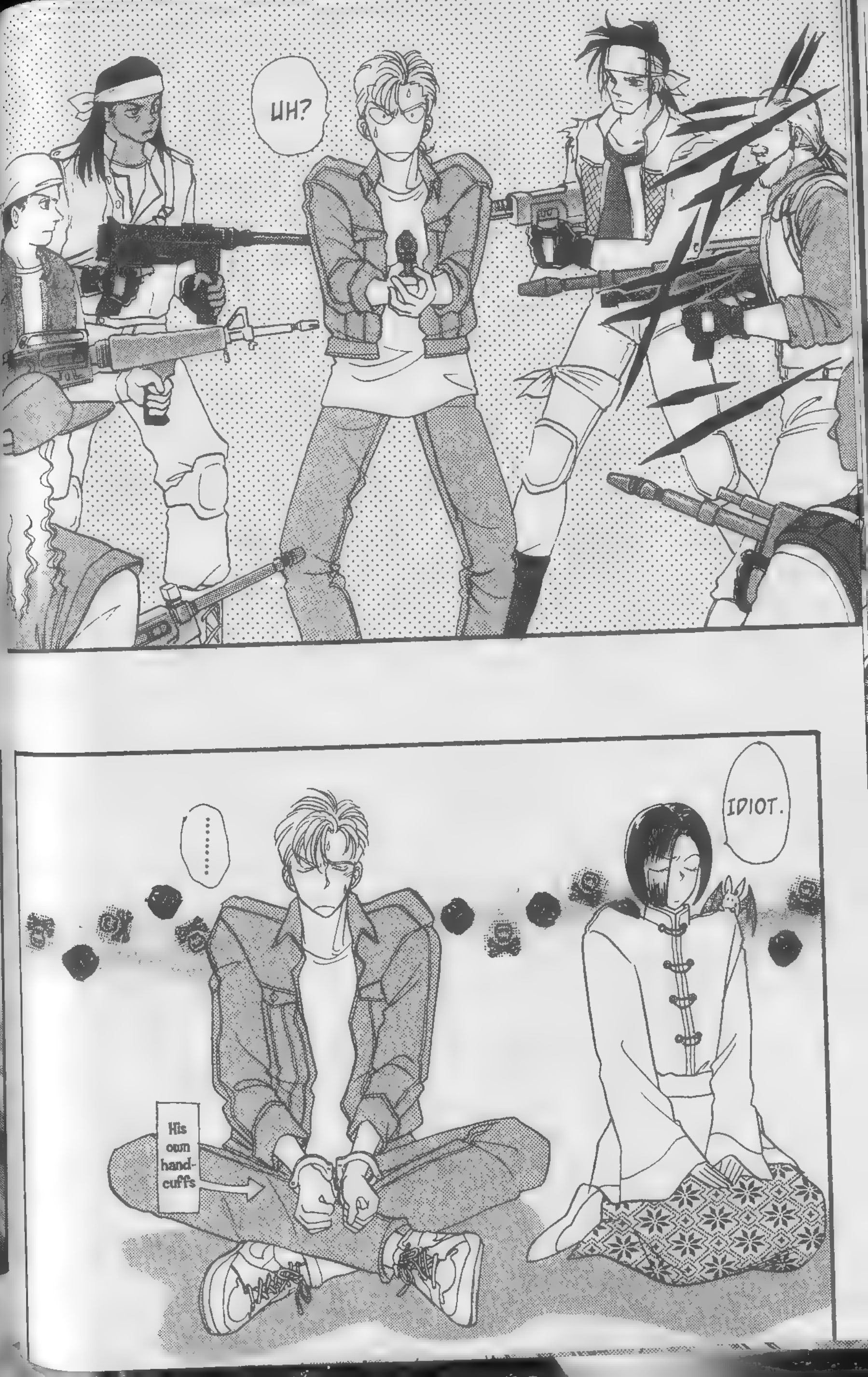

OLD MR. COUNT WILL PAY GOOD MONEY TO SEE HIS PRETTY BOY GRANDSON RETURNED UNHARMED.
YOU'RE HOLDING ME FOR RANSOM?
TITLE ASIDE, MY FAMILY'S QUITE POOR. THE PET SHOP IS ALL WE HAVE.
THERE'S NO FORTUNE.
THERE'S MONEY.
WE JUST NEED TO LOCATE IT.
YOU SEE, YOUR GRANDFATHER KNOWS THE WAY TO...
...THE HIDDEN TREASURE OF THE INCAS: THE LOST CITY OF EL DORADO.

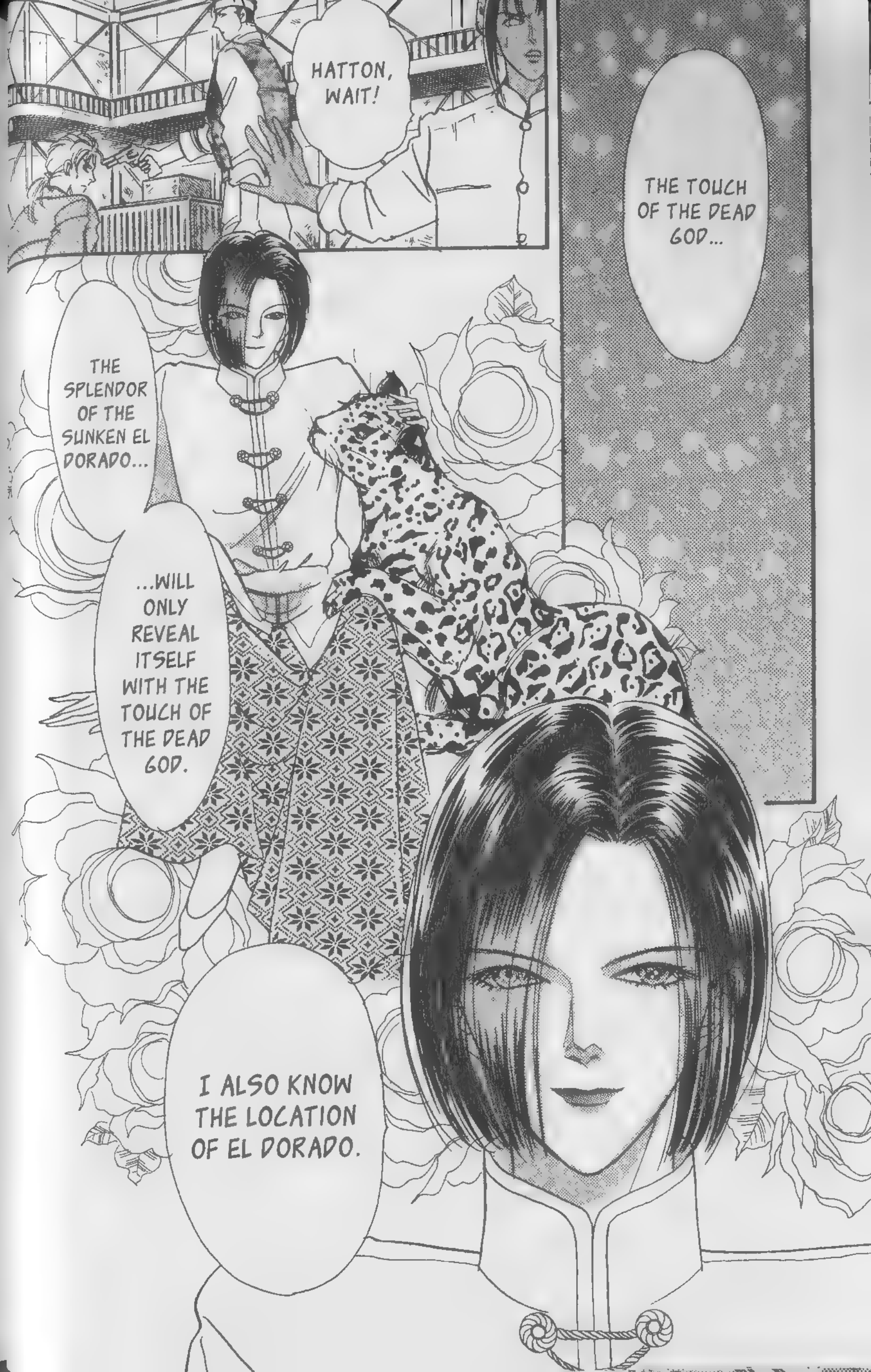

WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU TAKING ME, BAT? WE'RE IN THE BARRIO.
IF I'M GONNA HAVE TO MIX IT UP HERE, I'M CALLIN' FOR BACKUP.
QUIT WHINING! I'M COMING!
50 YEARS AGO, MY GRANDFATHER WAS VISITED BY A MAN FROM CHINA KNOWN ONLY AS "D"...
I HAVE BEEN SEEKING THE DESCENDANT OF ATAWALPA, THE EMPEROR OF THE INCAS.
AND WHY SHOULD THIS CONCERN ME?
BECAUSE THIS JAGUAR TELLS ME THAT YOU ARE THE MAN I SEEK.
THIS CUB IS THE DESCENDANT OF THE SACRED JAGUAR THAT ONCE PROTECTED THE EMPIRE. LONG HAS SHE SOUGHT HER RIGHTFUL MASTER. AS THAT JAGUAR ONCE SERVED ATAWALPA, SO SHALL THIS ONE SERVE YOU.

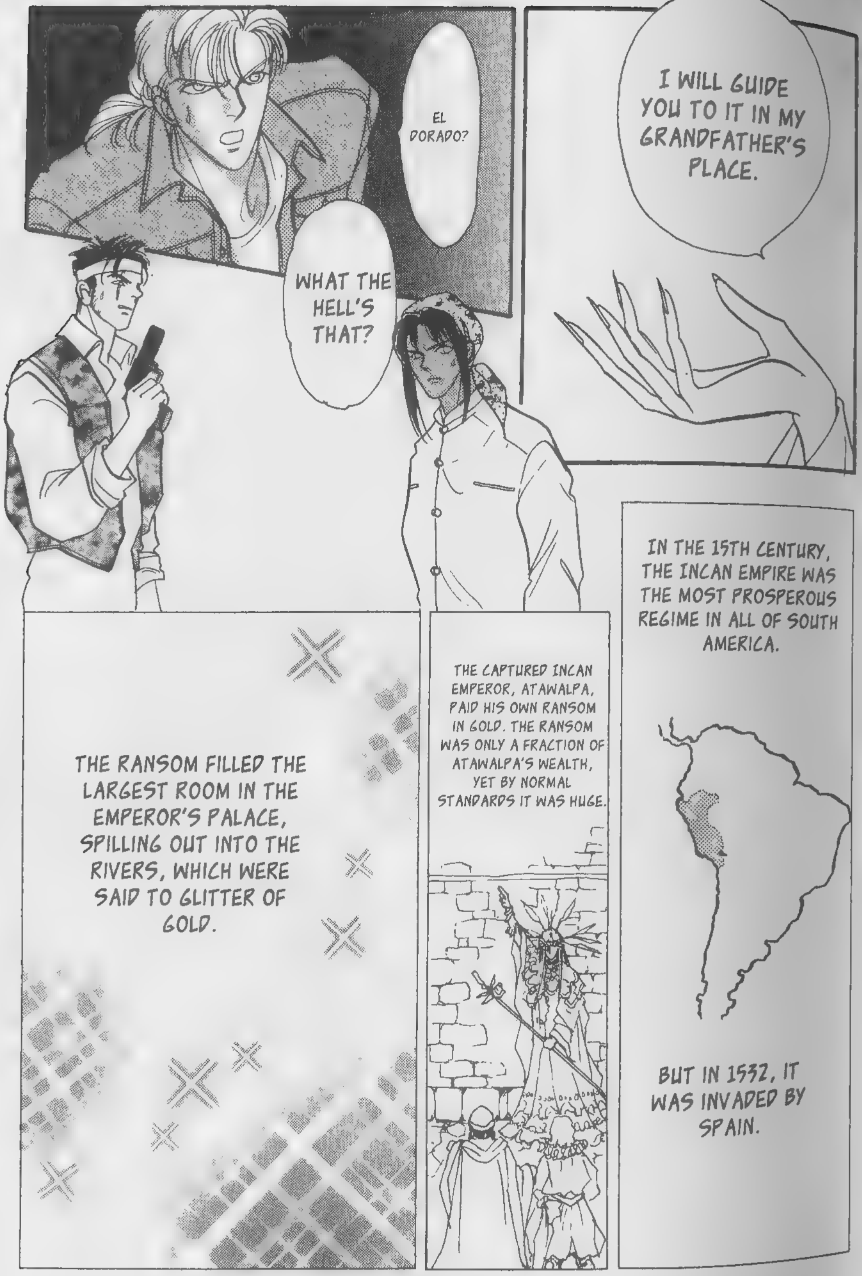

JAGUARS HAVE BEEN THE PETS OF MY FAMILY EVER SINCE.
THIS GIRL'S A TENTH GENERATION DESCENDANT FROM THE CAT YOUR GRANDFATHER GAVE TO MINE.
HOLDING ME HOSTAGE WILL NOT BENEFIT YOU.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE MY GRANDFATHER IS. HE IS TRAVELING ABROAD, AND OTHER THAN THE RARE LETTER OR POSTCARD, HE PREFERS HIS WHEREABOUTS TO REMAIN UNKNOWN TO ME.
HEH. SIMPLE ENOUGH TO FIX.
WE'LL JUST CUT OFF ONE OF THESE FINGERS AND SEND IT TO THE LOCAL TV STATION WITH A NOTE THAT WE'RE LOOKIN' FOR COUNT D.
HATTON?
!!
WORD WILL SPREAD SOON ENOUGH. GRAMPS'LL COME RUNNIN' IN A MATTER OF DAYS.

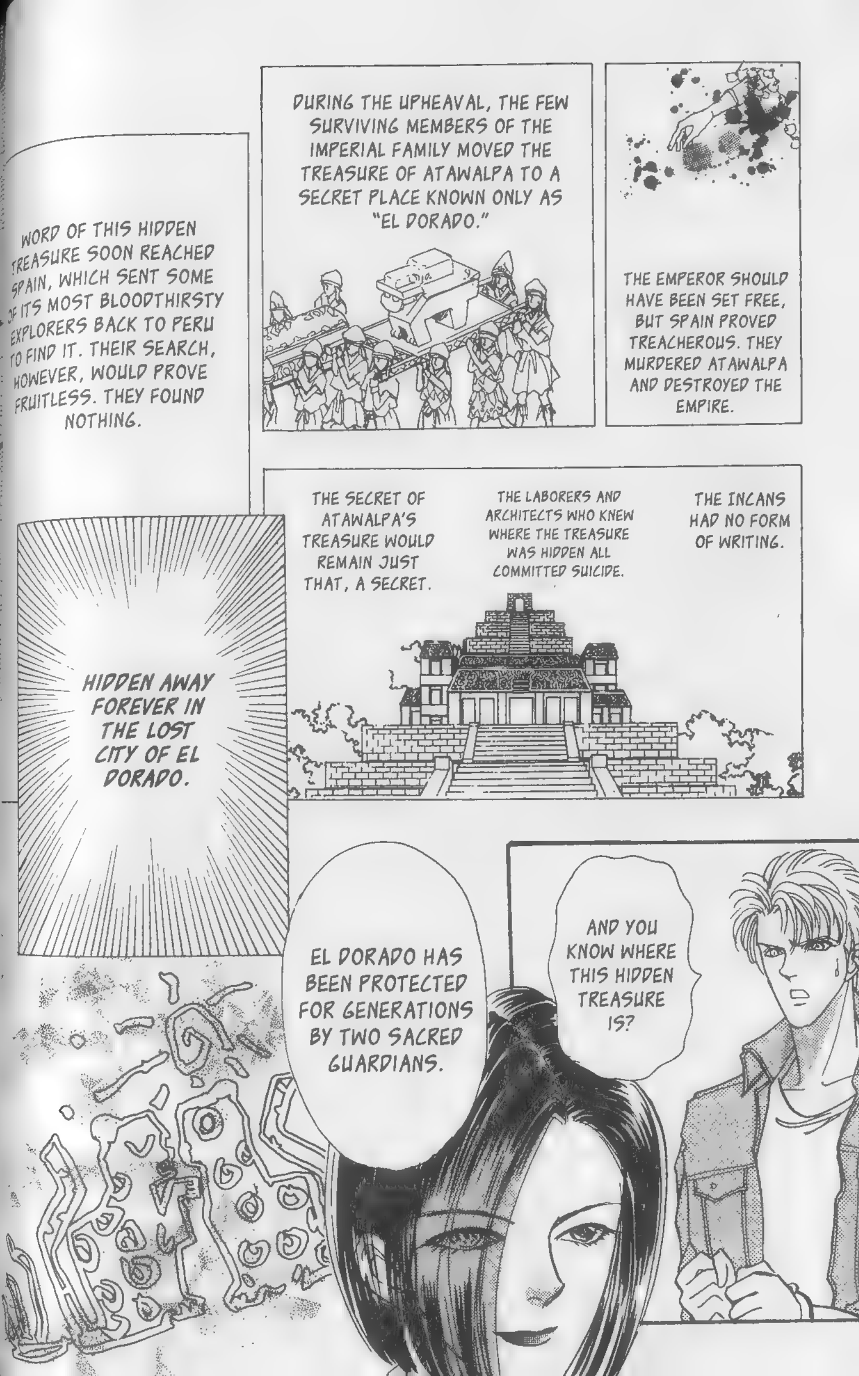

THAT'S FAR ENOUGH!!
KYU!!
NOBODY MOVE!!
DETECTIVE ORCOT!
DETECTIVE ?!

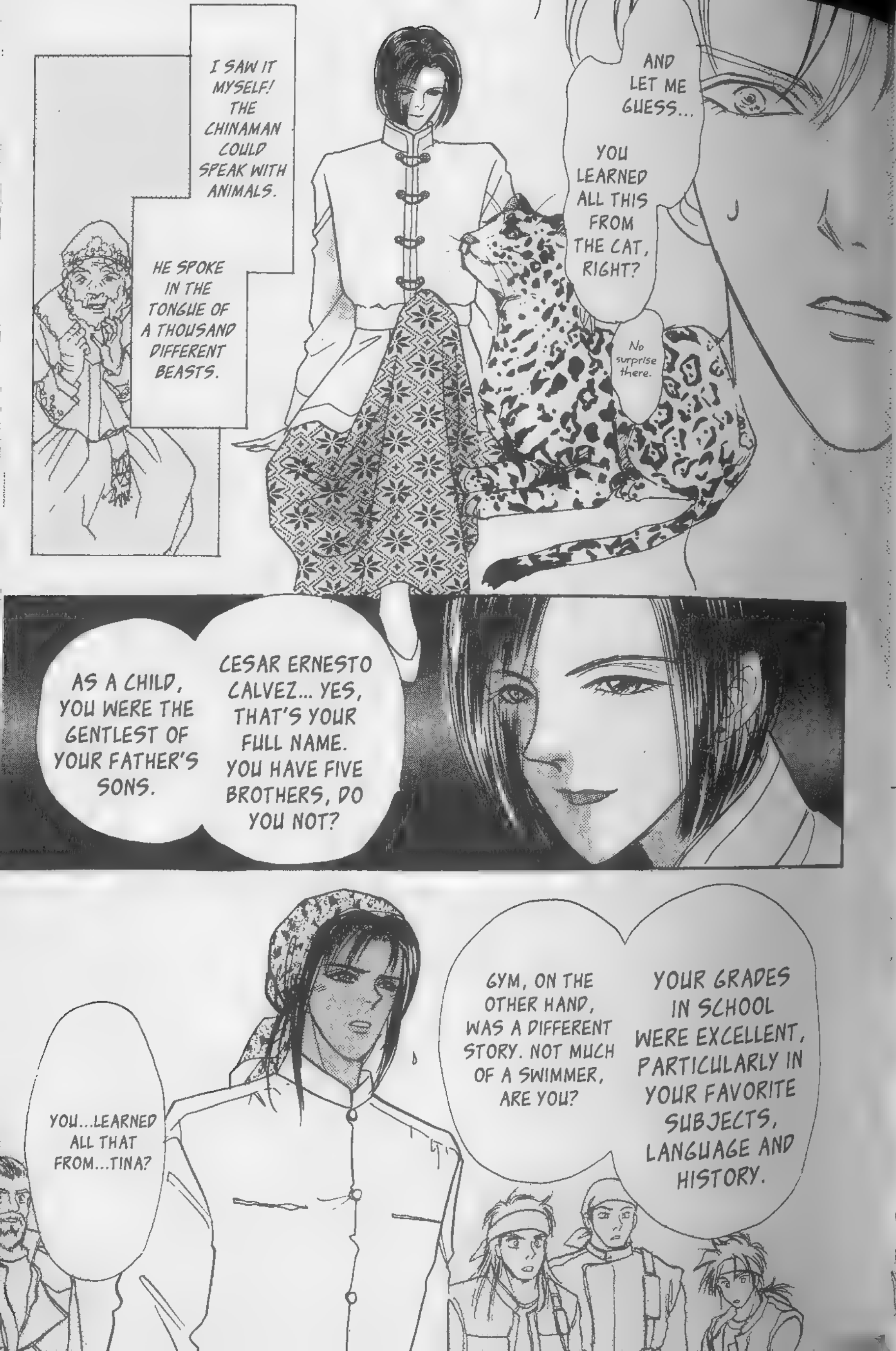

THEY HAVE THE FIREPOWER, BUT IF THIS IS A DRUG CARTEL WHERE'S ALL THE DOPE?
THESE GUYS HAVE "POLITICAL EXTREMISTS" WRITTEN ALL OVER 'EM. THEY'RE NOT HERE TO DO BUSINESS, THEY'RE HERE TO FIGHT A WAR.
You should know better than to drink on duty.
It's Diet Pepsi, you moron!
YOU GUYS AREN'T SMUGGLERS. YOU'RE TERRORISTS.
THE FBI RECENTLY FLOATED A LIST OF KNOWN TERRORIST GROUPS IN THE CITY. ONLY ONE OF THEM USES THE JAGUAR AS ITS CALLING CARD.
PRETTY SWIFT, MR. DETECTIVE.
BUT THIS DOESN'T INVOLVE YOU.
SO THERE'S NO REASON WHY I SHOULD LET YOU LIVE.
A GROUP OF ULTRA-LEFT WING EXTREMISTS FROM PERU, CALLING THEMSELVES "THE HAND OF QUETZALCOATL."

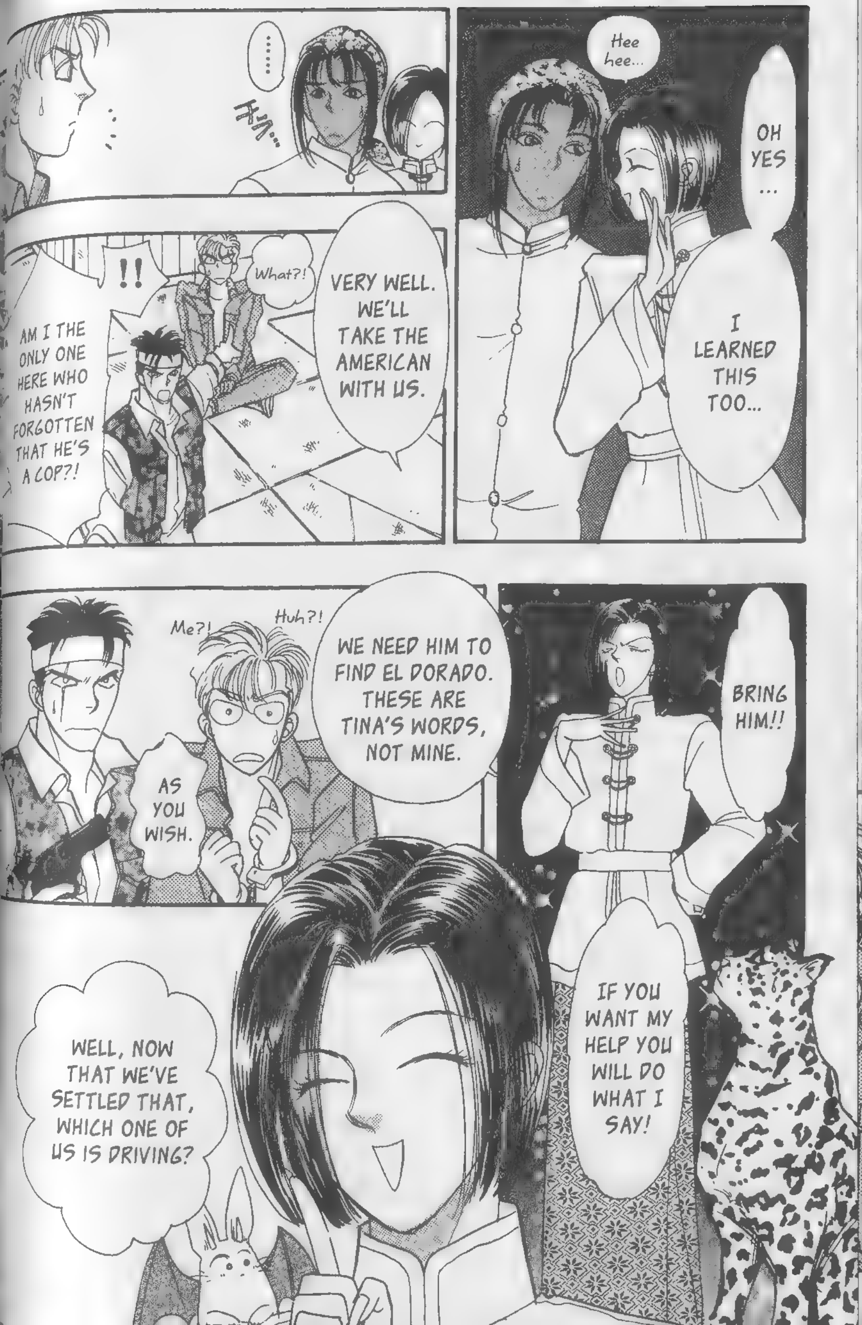

UH?
……
IDIOT.
His own hand-cuffs

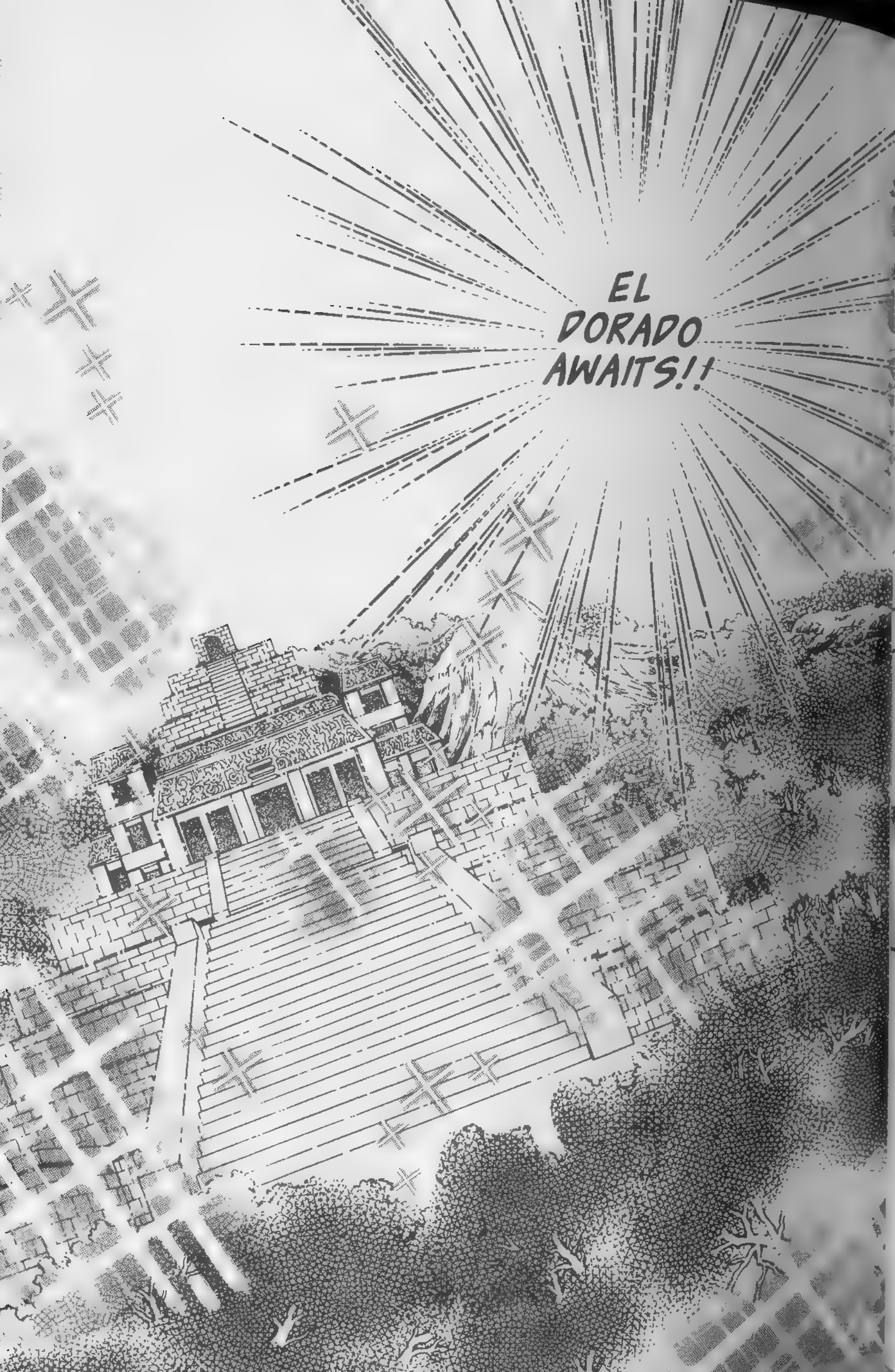

THE TOUCH OF THE DEAD GOD...
HATTON, WAIT!
THE SPLENDOR OF THE SUNKEN EL DORADO...
...WILL ONLY REVEAL ITSELF WITH THE TOUCH OF THE DEAD GOD.
I ALSO KNOW THE LOCATION OF EL DORADO.

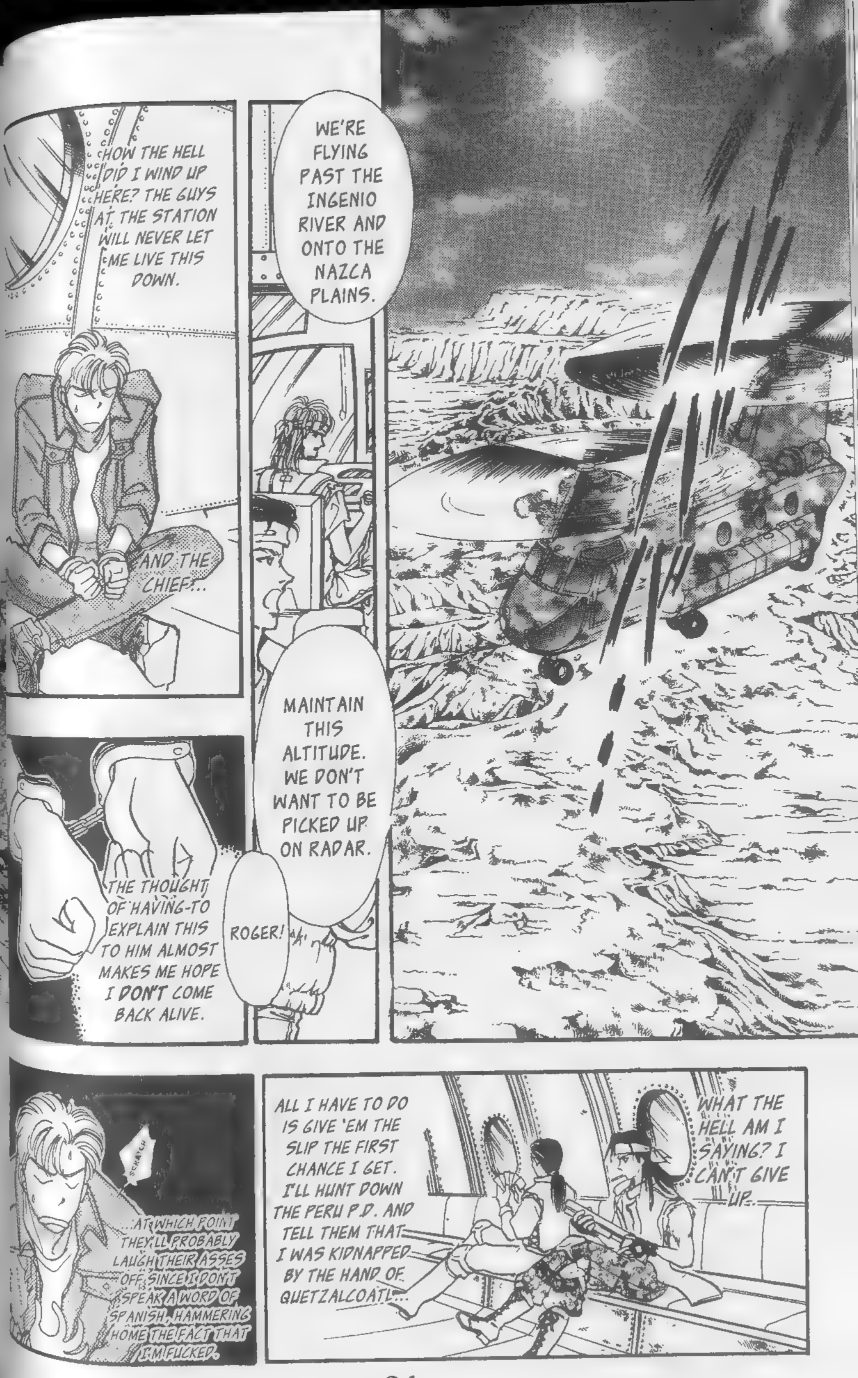

EL DORADO?
WHAT THE HELL'S THAT?
I WILL GUIDE YOU TO IT IN MY GRANDFATHER'S PLACE.
IN THE 15TH CENTURY, THE INCAN EMPIRE WAS THE MOST PROSPEROUS REGIME IN ALL OF SOUTH AMERICA.
BUT IN 1532, IT WAS INVADED BY SPAIN.
THE CAPTURED INCAN EMPEROR, ATAWALPA, PAID HIS OWN RANSOM IN GOLD. THE RANSOM WAS ONLY A FRACTION OF ATAWALPA'S WEALTH, YET BY NORMAL STANDARDS IT WAS HUGE.
THE RANSOM FILLED THE LARGEST ROOM IN THE EMPEROR'S PALACE, SPILLING OUT INTO THE RIVERS, WHICH WERE SAID TO GLITTER OF GOLD.

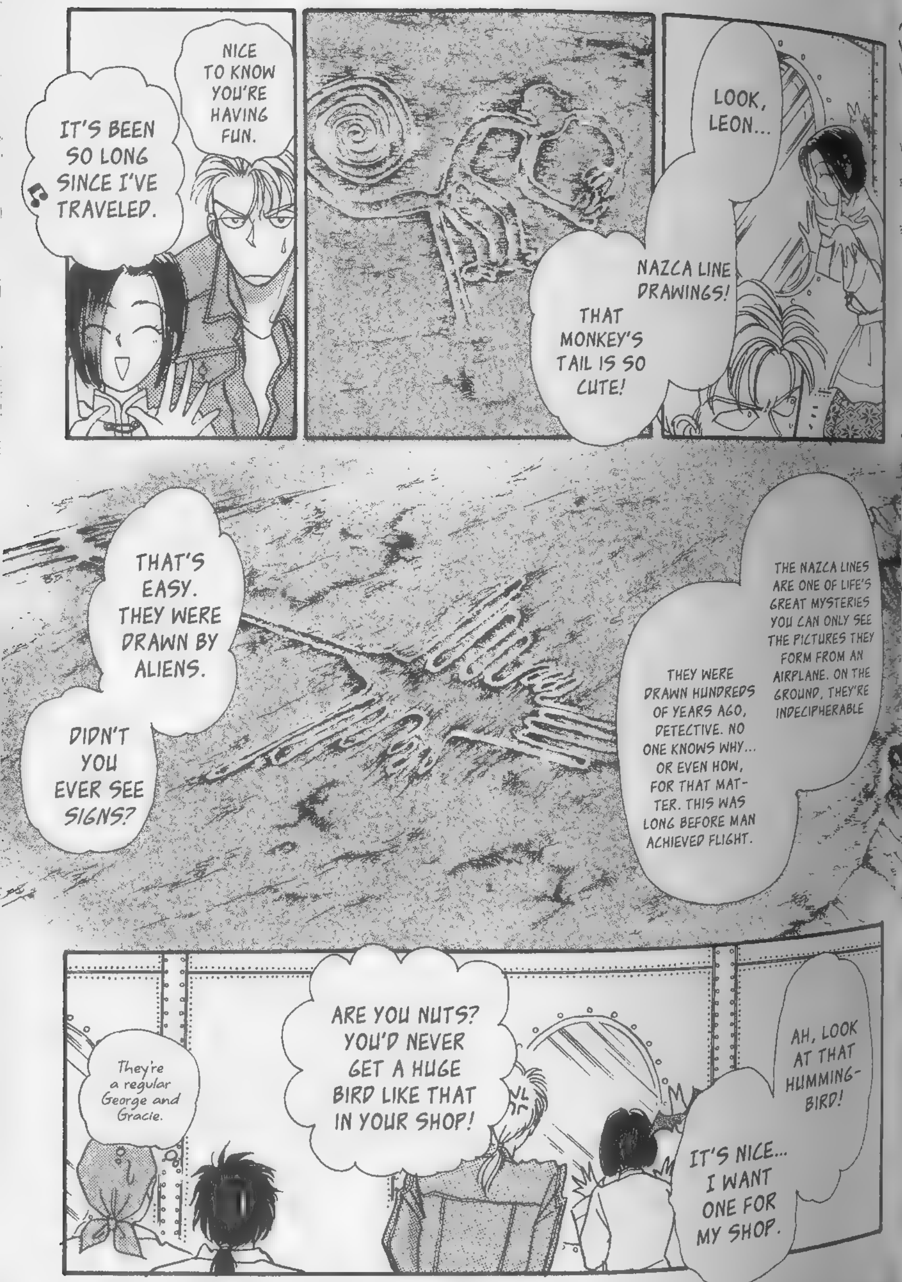

THE EMPEROR SHOULD HAVE BEEN SET FREE, BUT SPAIN PROVED TREACHEROUS. THEY MURDERED ATAWALPA AND DESTROYED THE EMPIRE.
DURING THE UPHEAVAL, THE FEW SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY MOVED THE TREASURE OF ATAWALPA TO A SECRET PLACE KNOWN ONLY AS "EL DORADO."
WORD OF THIS HIDDEN TREASURE SOON REACHED SPAIN, WHICH SENT SOME OF ITS MOST BLOODTHIRSTY EXPLORERS BACK TO PERU TO FIND IT. THEIR SEARCH, HOWEVER, WOULD PROVE FRUITLESS. THEY FOUND NOTHING.
THE INCANS HAD NO FORM OF WRITING.
THE LABORERS AND ARCHITECTS WHO KNEW WHERE THE TREASURE WAS HIDDEN ALL COMMITTED SUICIDE.
THE SECRET OF ATAWALPA'S TREASURE WOULD REMAIN JUST THAT, A SECRET.
HIDDEN AWAY FOREVER IN THE LOST CITY OF EL DORADO.
AND YOU KNOW WHERE THIS HIDDEN TREASURE IS?
EL DORADO HAS BEEN PROTECTED FOR GENERATIONS BY TWO SACRED GUARDIANS.

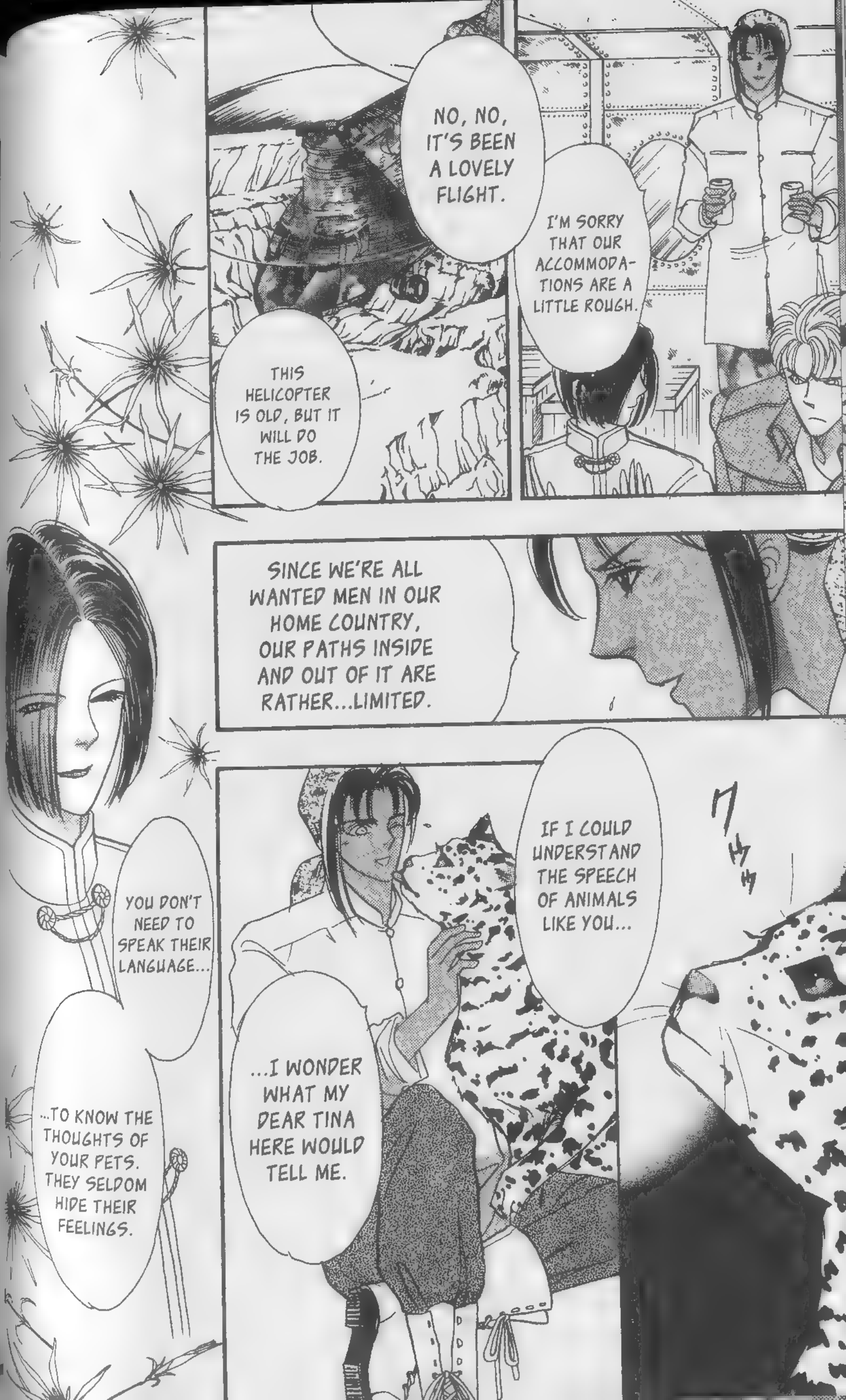

I SAW IT MYSELF! THE CHINAMAN COULD SPEAK WITH ANIMALS.
HE SPOKE IN THE TONGUE OF A THOUSAND DIFFERENT BEASTS.
AND LET ME GUESS...
YOU LEARNED ALL THIS FROM THE CAT, RIGHT?
No surprise there.
CESAR ERNESTO CALVEZ... YES, THAT'S YOUR FULL NAME. YOU HAVE FIVE BROTHERS, DO YOU NOT?
AS A CHILD, YOU WERE THE GENTLEST OF YOUR FATHER'S SONS.
YOUR GRADES IN SCHOOL WERE EXCELLENT, PARTICULARLY IN YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECTS, LANGUAGE AND HISTORY.
GYM, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS A DIFFERENT STORY. NOT MUCH OF A SWIMMER, ARE YOU?
YOU...LEARNED ALL THAT FROM...TINA?

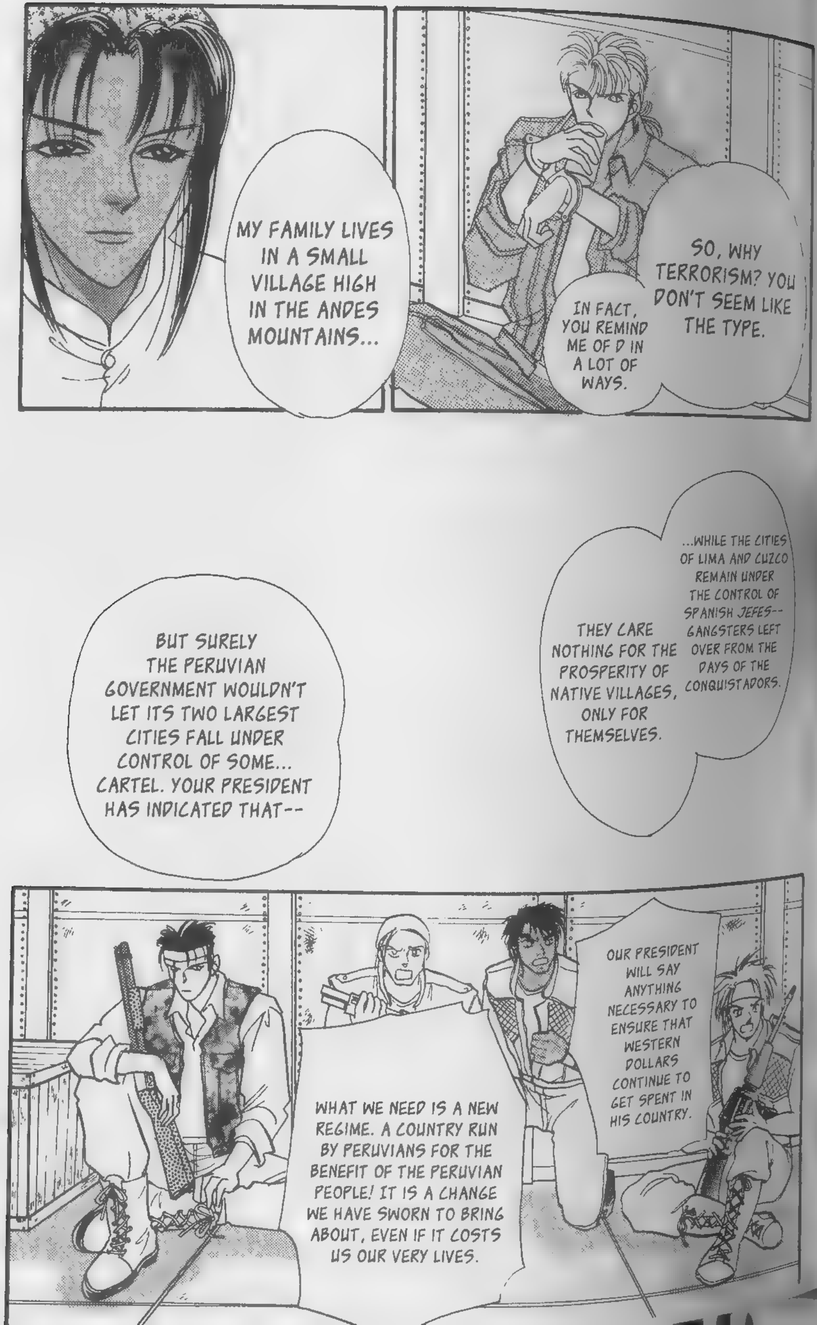

Hee hee...
OH YES...
I LEARNED THIS TOO...
......
VERY WELL. WE'LL TAKE THE AMERICAN WITH US.
What?!
!!
AM I THE ONLY ONE HERE WHO HASN'T FORGOTTEN THAT HE'S A COP?!
BRING HIM!!
IF YOU WANT MY HELP YOU WILL DO WHAT I SAY!
WE NEED HIM TO FIND EL DORADO. THESE ARE TINA'S WORDS, NOT MINE.
Huh?!
Me?!
AS YOU WISH.
WELL, NOW THAT WE'VE SETTLED THAT, WHICH ONE OF US IS DRIVING?

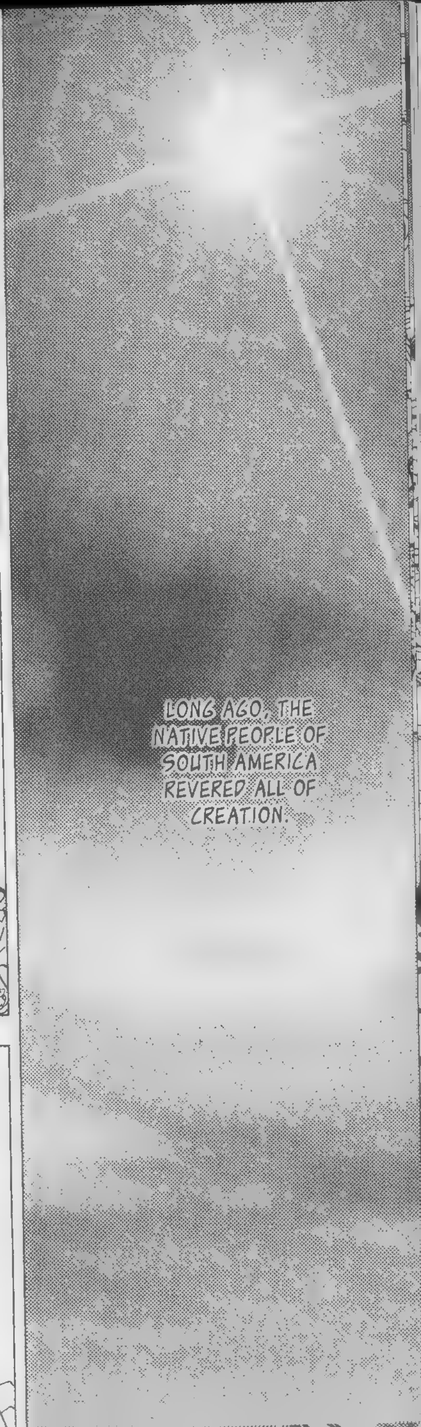

EL DORADO AWAITS!!

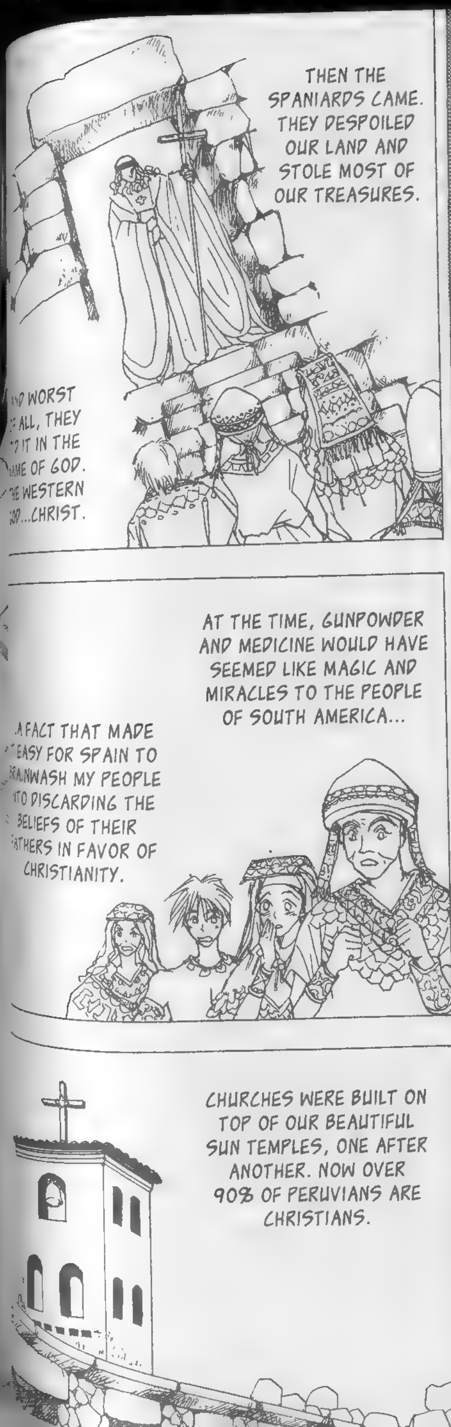

WE'RE FLYING PAST THE INGENIO RIVER AND ONTO THE NAZCA PLAINS.
HOW THE HELL DID I WIND UP HERE? THE GUYS AT THE STATION WILL NEVER LET ME LIVE THIS DOWN.
AND THE CHIEF...
MAINTAIN THIS ALTITUDE. WE DON'T WANT TO BE PICKED UP ON RADAR.
ROGER!
THE THOUGHT OF HAVING TO EXPLAIN THIS TO HIM ALMOST MAKES ME HOPE I DON'T COME BACK ALIVE.
WHAT THE HELL AM I SAYING? I CAN'T GIVE UP...
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS GIVE 'EM THE SLIP THE FIRST CHANCE I GET. I'LL HUNT DOWN THE PERU P.D. AND TELL THEM THAT I WAS KIDNAPPED BY THE HAND OF QUETZALCOATL...
SCRATCH
...AT WHICH POINT THEY'LL PROBABLY LAUGH THEIR ASSES OFF, SINCE I DON'T SPEAK A WORD OF SPANISH, HAMMERING HOME THE FACT THAT I'M FUCKED.

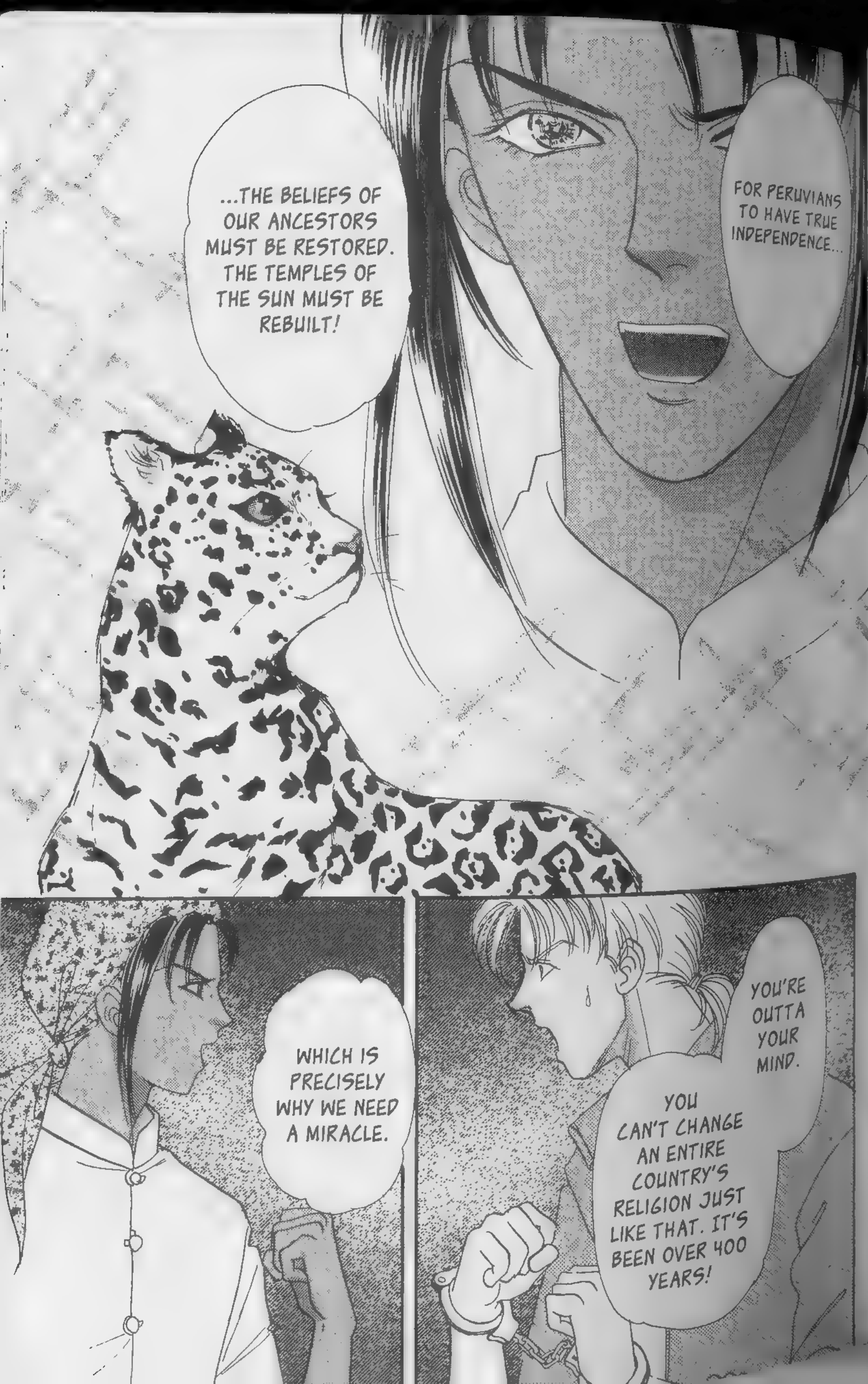

LOOK, LEON...
NAZCA LINE DRAWINGS!
THAT MONKEY'S TAIL IS SO CUTE!
NICE TO KNOW YOU'RE HAVING FUN.
IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE TRAVELED. ♪
THE NAZCA LINES ARE ONE OF LIFE'S GREAT MYSTERIES. YOU CAN ONLY SEE THE PICTURES THEY FORM FROM AN AIRPLANE. ON THE GROUND, THEY'RE INDECIPHERABLE
THEY WERE DRAWN HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO, DETECTIVE. NO ONE KNOWS WHY... OR EVEN HOW, FOR THAT MATTER. THIS WAS LONG BEFORE MAN ACHIEVED FLIGHT.
THAT'S EASY. THEY WERE DRAWN BY ALIENS.
DIDN'T YOU EVER SEE SIGNS?
AH, LOOK AT THAT HUMMING-BIRD!
IT'S NICE... I WANT ONE FOR MY SHOP.
ARE YOU NUTS? YOU'D NEVER GET A HUGE BIRD LIKE THAT IN YOUR SHOP!
They're a regular George and Gracie.

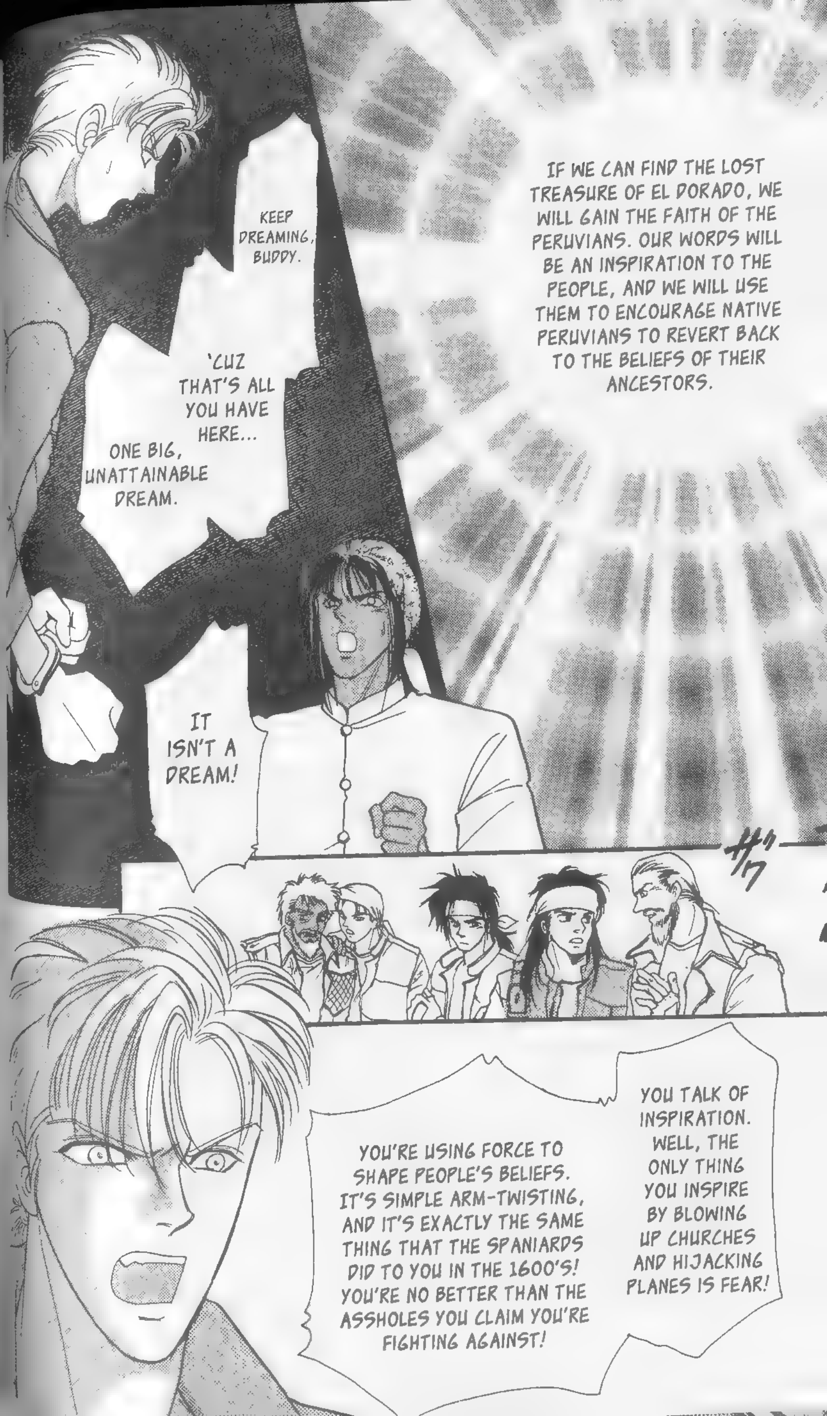

I'M SORRY THAT OUR ACCOMMODATIONS ARE A LITTLE ROUGH.
NO, NO, IT'S BEEN A LOVELY FLIGHT.
THIS HELICOPTER IS OLD, BUT IT WILL DO THE JOB.
SINCE WE'RE ALL WANTED MEN IN OUR HOME COUNTRY, OUR PATHS INSIDE AND OUT OF IT ARE RATHER...LIMITED.
IF I COULD UNDERSTAND THE SPEECH OF ANIMALS LIKE YOU...
...I WONDER WHAT MY DEAR TINA HERE WOULD TELL ME.
YOU DON'T NEED TO SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE...
...TO KNOW THE THOUGHTS OF YOUR PETS. THEY SELDOM HIDE THEIR FEELINGS.

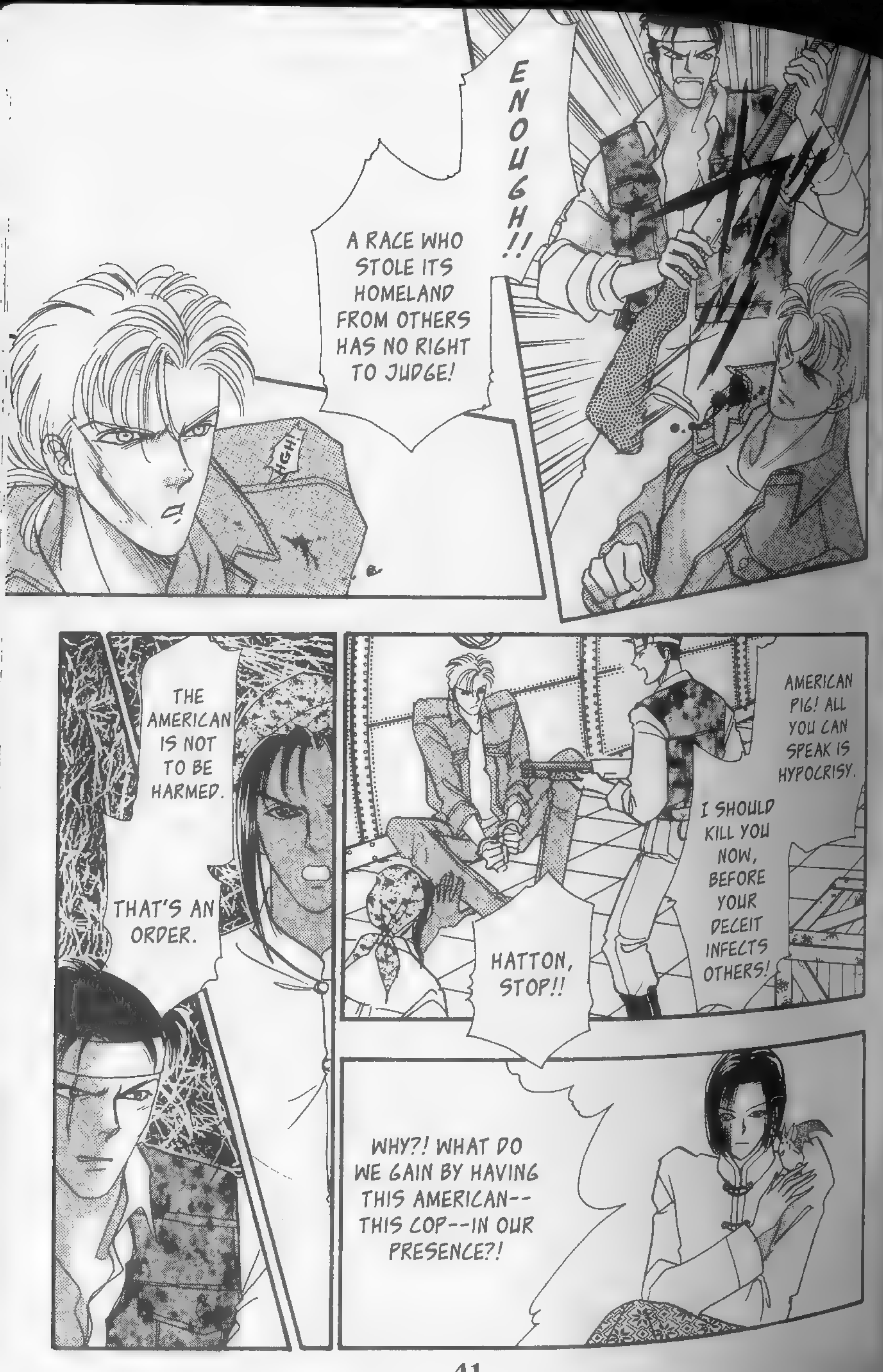

SO, WHY TERRORISM? YOU DON'T SEEM LIKE THE TYPE.
IN FACT, YOU REMIND ME OF D IN A LOT OF WAYS.
MY FAMILY LIVES IN A SMALL VILLAGE HIGH IN THE ANDES MOUNTAINS...
...WHILE THE CITIES OF LIMA AND CUZCO REMAIN UNDER THE CONTROL OF SPANISH JEFES--GANGSTERS LEFT OVER FROM THE DAYS OF THE CONQUISTADORS.
THEY CARE NOTHING FOR THE PROSPERITY OF NATIVE VILLAGES, ONLY FOR THEMSELVES.
BUT SURELY THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT WOULDN'T LET ITS TWO LARGEST CITIES FALL UNDER CONTROL OF SOME... CARTEL. YOUR PRESIDENT HAS INDICATED THAT--
OUR PRESIDENT WILL SAY ANYTHING NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT WESTERN DOLLARS CONTINUE TO GET SPENT IN HIS COUNTRY.
WHAT WE NEED IS A NEW REGIME. A COUNTRY RUN BY PERUVIANS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PERUVIAN PEOPLE! IT IS A CHANGE WE HAVE SWORN TO BRING ABOUT, EVEN IF IT COSTS US OUR VERY LIVES.

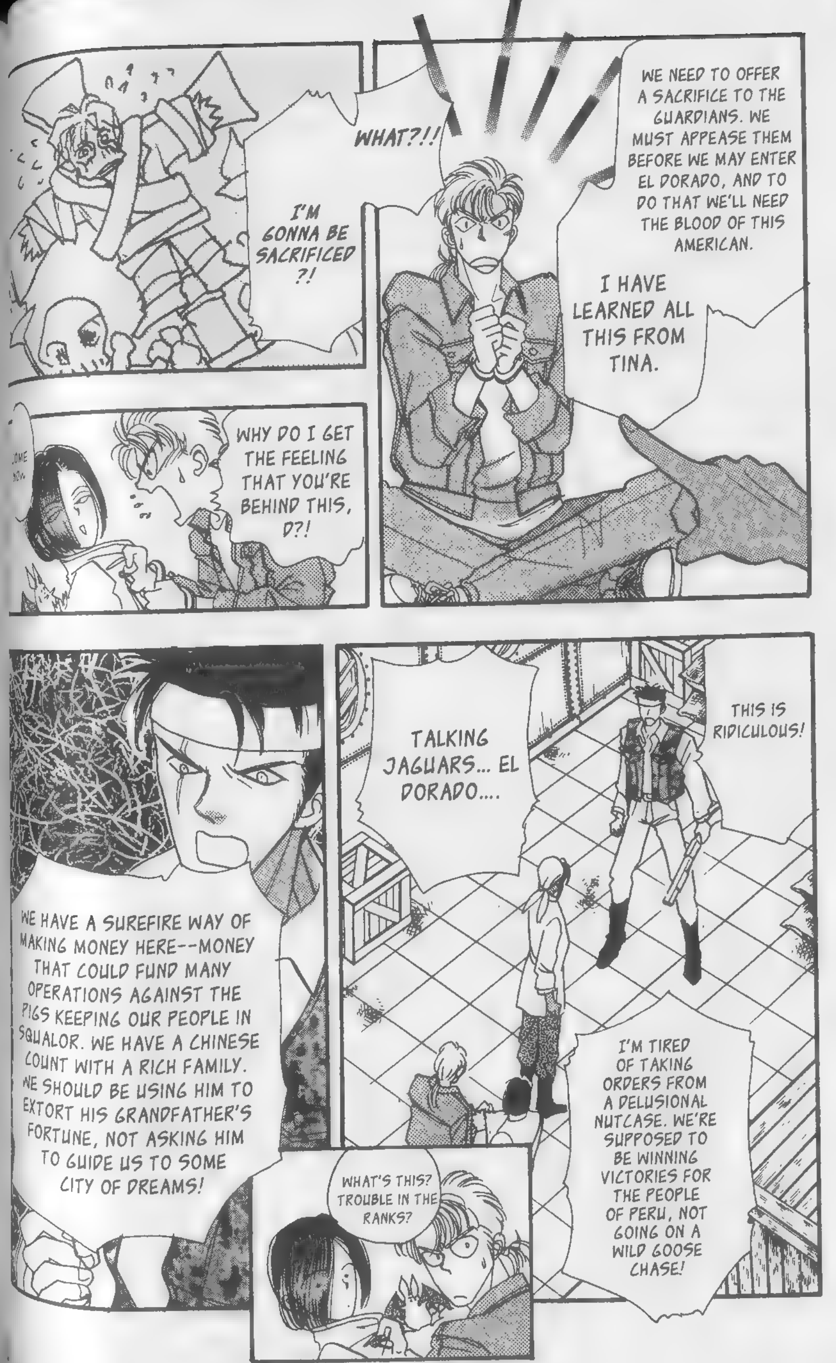

LONG AGO, THE NATIVE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AMERICA REVERED ALL OF CREATION.

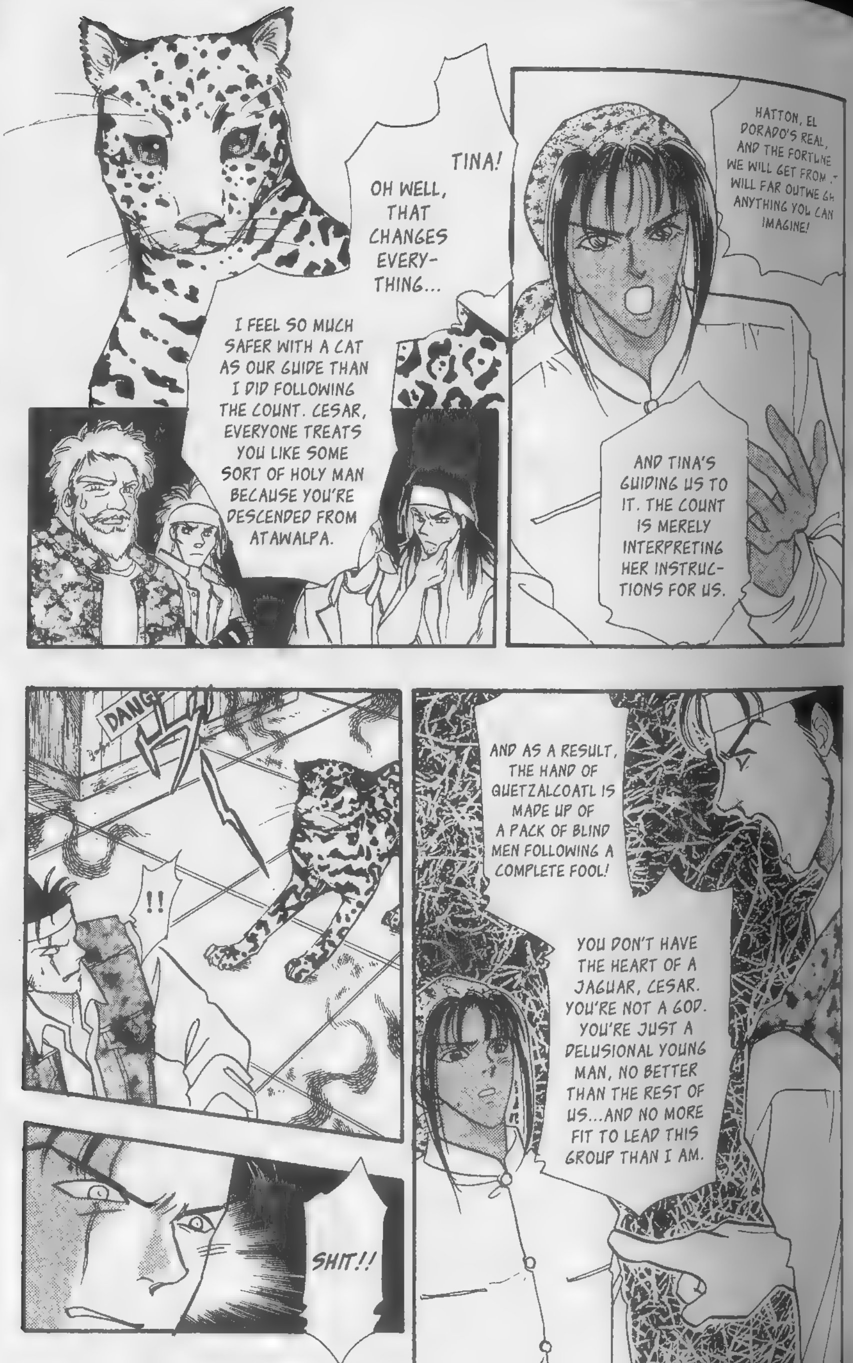

THEN THE SPANIARDS CAME. THEY DESPOILED OUR LAND AND STOLE MOST OF OUR TREASURES.
ND WORST F ALL, THEY D IT IN THE AME OF GOD. HE WESTERN OD...CHRIST.
AT THE TIME, GUNPOWDER AND MEDICINE WOULD HAVE SEEMED LIKE MAGIC AND MIRACLES TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AMERICA...
..A FACT THAT MADE EASY FOR SPAIN TO RAINWASH MY PEOPLE TO DISCARDING THE BELIEFS OF THEIR ATHERS IN FAVOR OF CHRISTIANITY.
CHURCHES WERE BUILT ON TOP OF OUR BEAUTIFUL SUN TEMPLES, ONE AFTER ANOTHER. NOW OVER 90% OF PERUVIANS ARE CHRISTIANS.

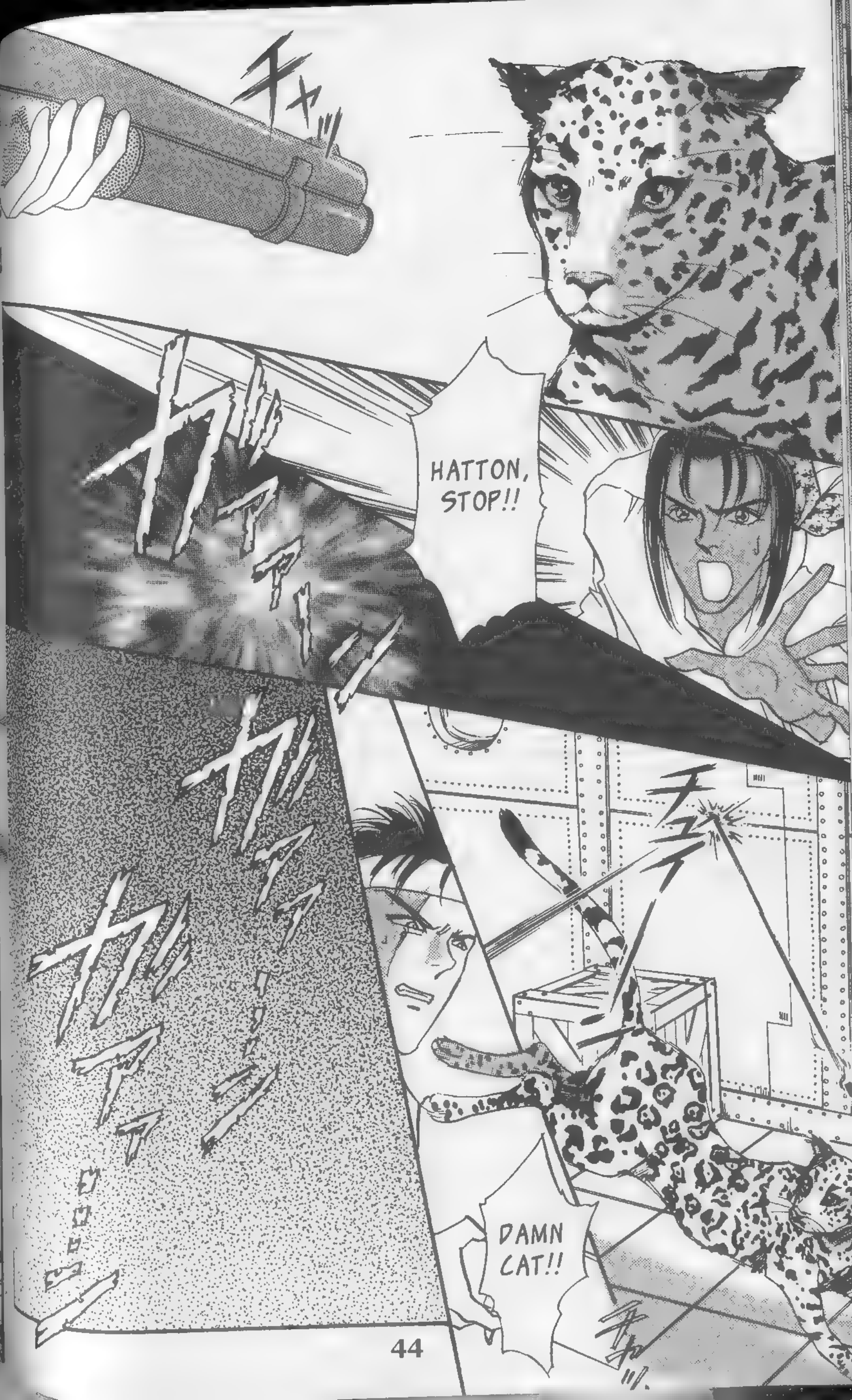

FOR PERUVIANS TO HAVE TRUE INDEPENDENCE...
...THE BELIEFS OF OUR ANCESTORS MUST BE RESTORED. THE TEMPLES OF THE SUN MUST BE REBUILT!
YOU'RE OUTTA YOUR MIND.
YOU CAN'T CHANGE AN ENTIRE COUNTRY'S RELIGION JUST LIKE THAT. IT'S BEEN OVER 400 YEARS!
WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY WE NEED A MIRACLE.

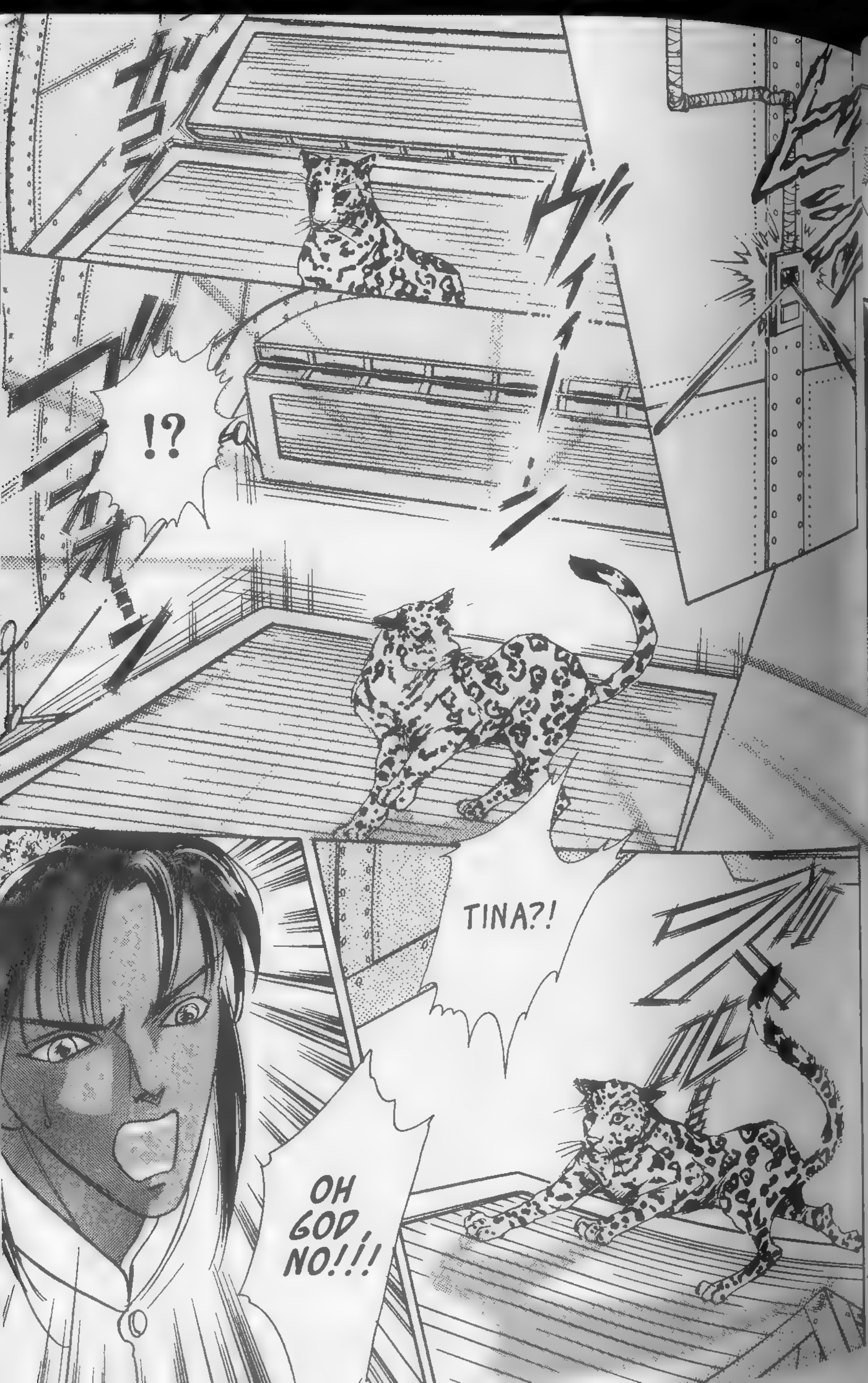

IF WE CAN FIND THE LOST TREASURE OF EL DORADO, WE WILL GAIN THE FAITH OF THE PERUVIANS. OUR WORDS WILL BE AN INSPIRATION TO THE PEOPLE, AND WE WILL USE THEM TO ENCOURAGE NATIVE PERUVIANS TO REVERT BACK TO THE BELIEFS OF THEIR ANCESTORS.
KEEP DREAMING, BUDDY.
'CUZ THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE HERE...
ONE BIG, UNATTAINABLE DREAM.
IT ISN'T A DREAM!
YOU TALK OF INSPIRATION. WELL, THE ONLY THING YOU INSPIRE BY BLOWING UP CHURCHES AND HIJACKING PLANES IS FEAR!
YOU'RE USING FORCE TO SHAPE PEOPLE'S BELIEFS. IT'S SIMPLE ARM-TWISTING, AND IT'S EXACTLY THE SAME THING THAT THE SPANIARDS DID TO YOU IN THE 1600'S! YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN THE ASSHOLES YOU CLAIM YOU'RE FIGHTING AGAINST!

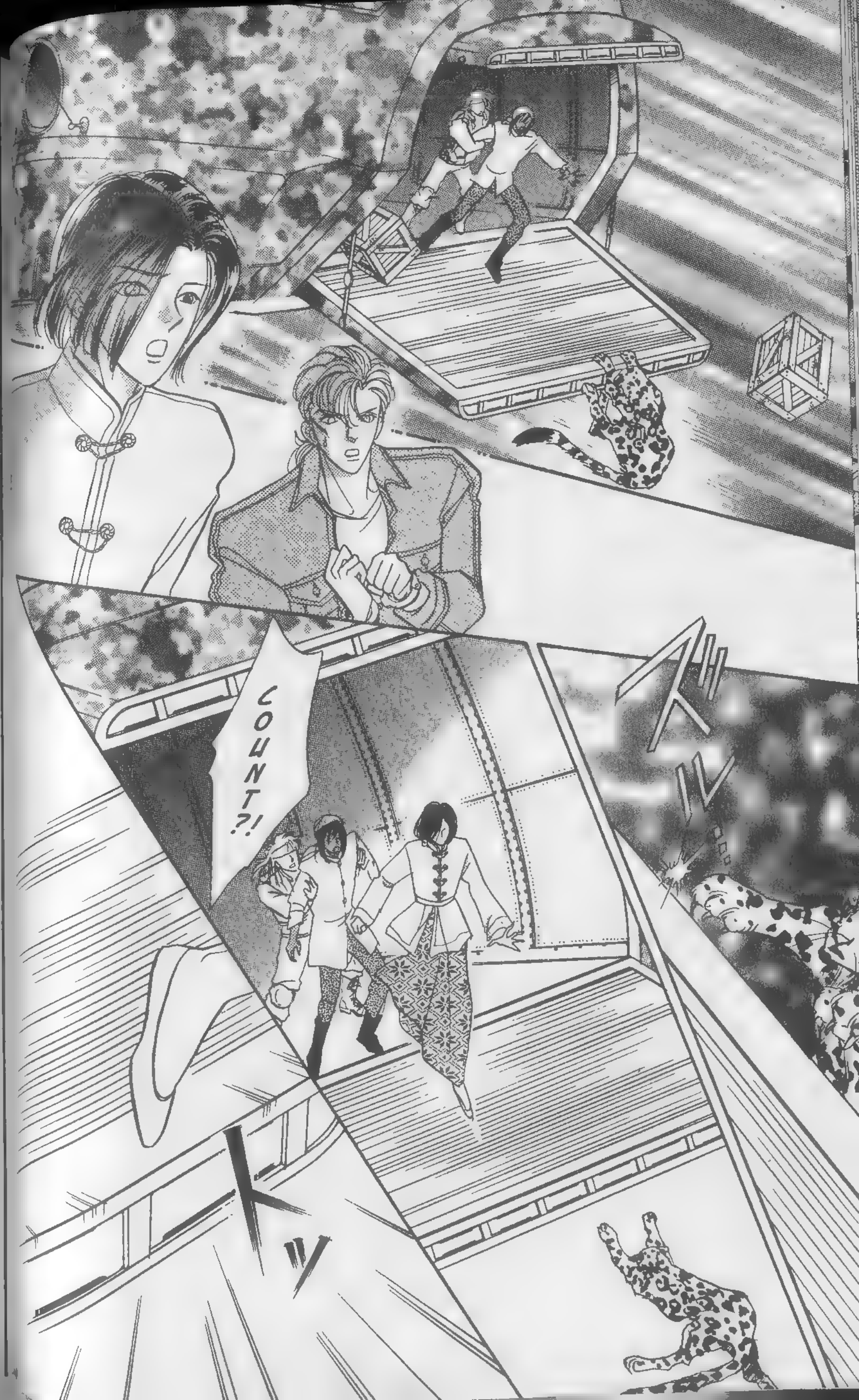

A RACE WHO STOLE ITS HOMELAND FROM OTHERS HAS NO RIGHT TO JUDGE!
ENOUGH!!
HGH!
AMERICAN PIG! ALL YOU CAN SPEAK IS HYPOCRISY.
I SHOULD KILL YOU NOW, BEFORE YOUR DECEIT INFECTS OTHERS!
HATTON, STOP!!
THE AMERICAN IS NOT TO BE HARMED.
THAT'S AN ORDER.
WHY?! WHAT DO WE GAIN BY HAVING THIS AMERICAN--THIS COP--IN OUR PRESENCE?!

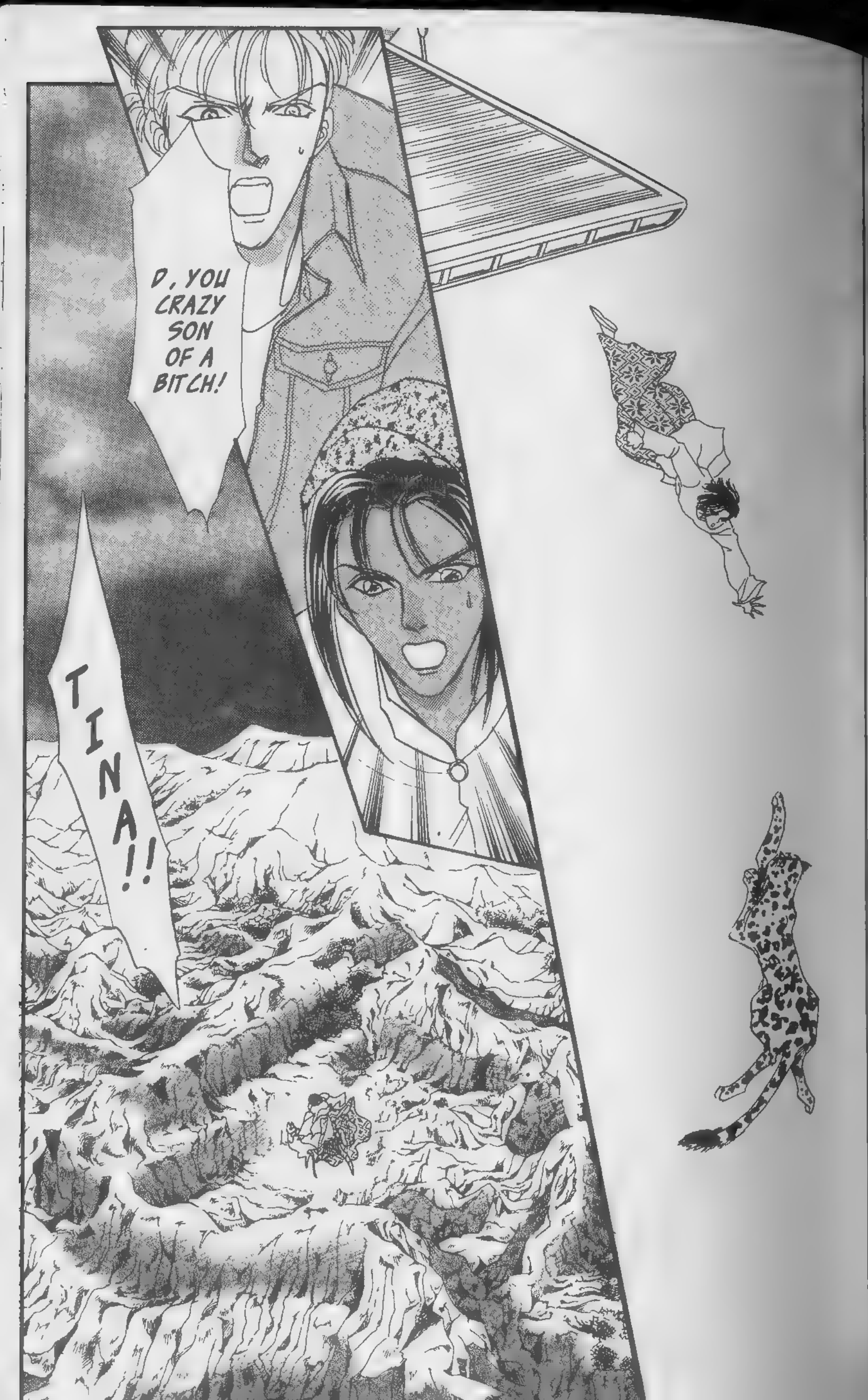

WE NEED TO OFFER A SACRIFICE TO THE GUARDIANS. WE MUST APPEASE THEM BEFORE WE MAY ENTER EL DORADO, AND TO DO THAT WE'LL NEED THE BLOOD OF THIS AMERICAN.
I HAVE LEARNED ALL THIS FROM TINA.
WHAT?!!
I'M GONNA BE SACRIFICED?!
WHY DO I GET THE FEELING THAT YOU'RE BEHIND THIS, D?!
COME NOW.
THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
TALKING JAGUARS... EL DORADO....
I'M TIRED OF TAKING ORDERS FROM A DELUSIONAL NUTCASE. WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE WINNING VICTORIES FOR THE PEOPLE OF PERU, NOT GOING ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE!
WE HAVE A SUREFIRE WAY OF MAKING MONEY HERE--MONEY THAT COULD FUND MANY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE PIGS KEEPING OUR PEOPLE IN SQUALOR. WE HAVE A CHINESE COUNT WITH A RICH FAMILY. WE SHOULD BE USING HIM TO EXTORT HIS GRANDFATHER'S FORTUNE, NOT ASKING HIM TO GUIDE US TO SOME CITY OF DREAMS!
WHAT'S THIS? TROUBLE IN THE RANKS?

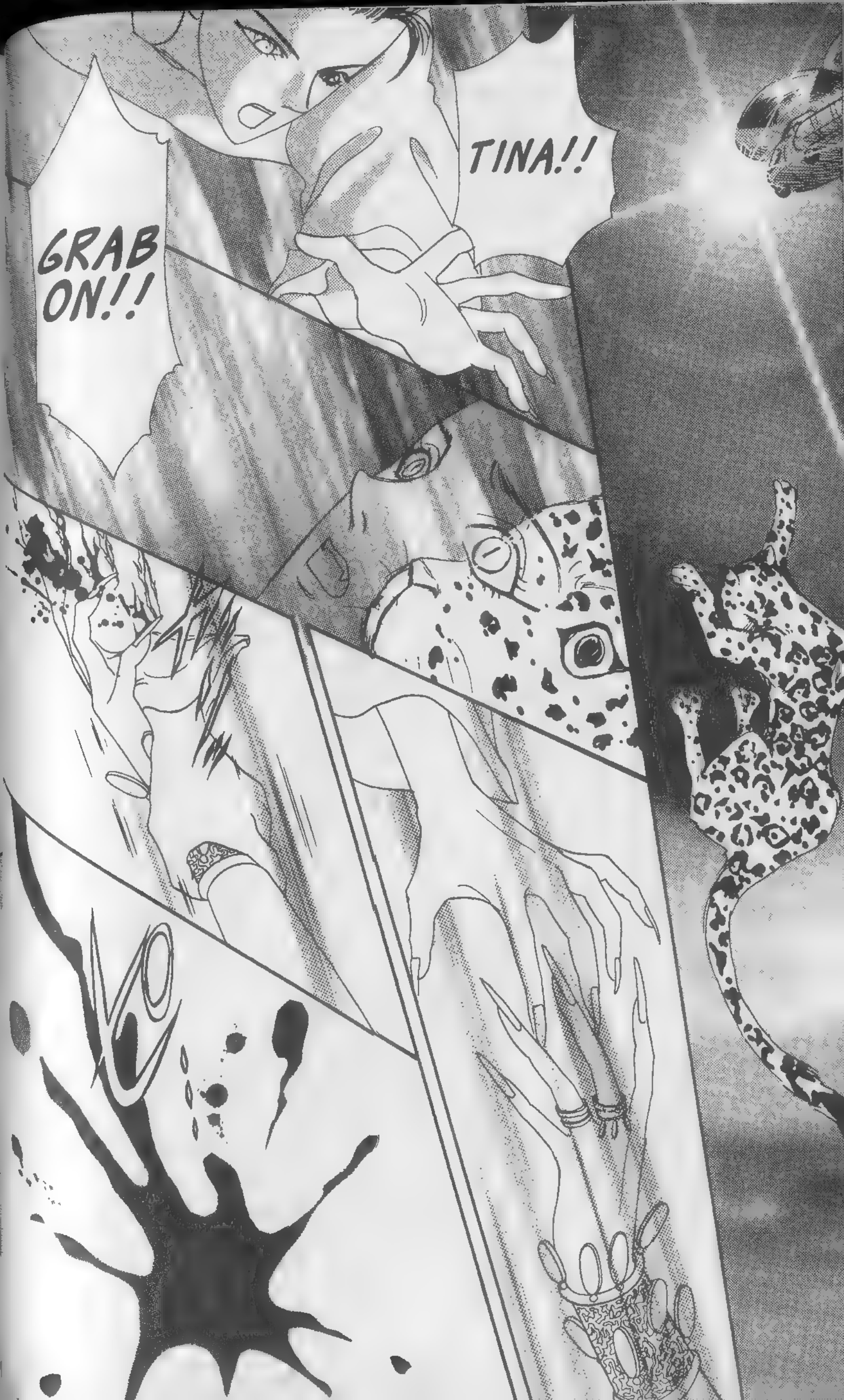

HATTON, EL DORADO'S REAL, AND THE FORTUNE WE WILL GET FROM IT WILL FAR OUTWEIGH ANYTHING YOU CAN IMAGINE!
AND TINA'S GUIDING US TO IT. THE COUNT IS MERELY INTERPRETING HER INSTRUCTIONS FOR US.
TINA!
OH WELL, THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING...
I FEEL SO MUCH SAFER WITH A CAT AS OUR GUIDE THAN I DID FOLLOWING THE COUNT. CESAR, EVERYONE TREATS YOU LIKE SOME SORT OF HOLY MAN BECAUSE YOU'RE DESCENDED FROM ATAWALPA.
AND AS A RESULT, THE HAND OF QUETZALCOATL IS MADE UP OF A PACK OF BLIND MEN FOLLOWING A COMPLETE FOOL!
YOU DON'T HAVE THE HEART OF A JAGUAR, CESAR. YOU'RE NOT A GOD. YOU'RE JUST A DELUSIONAL YOUNG MAN, NO BETTER THAN THE REST OF US...AND NO MORE FIT TO LEAD THIS GROUP THAN I AM.
DANG
!!
SHIT!!

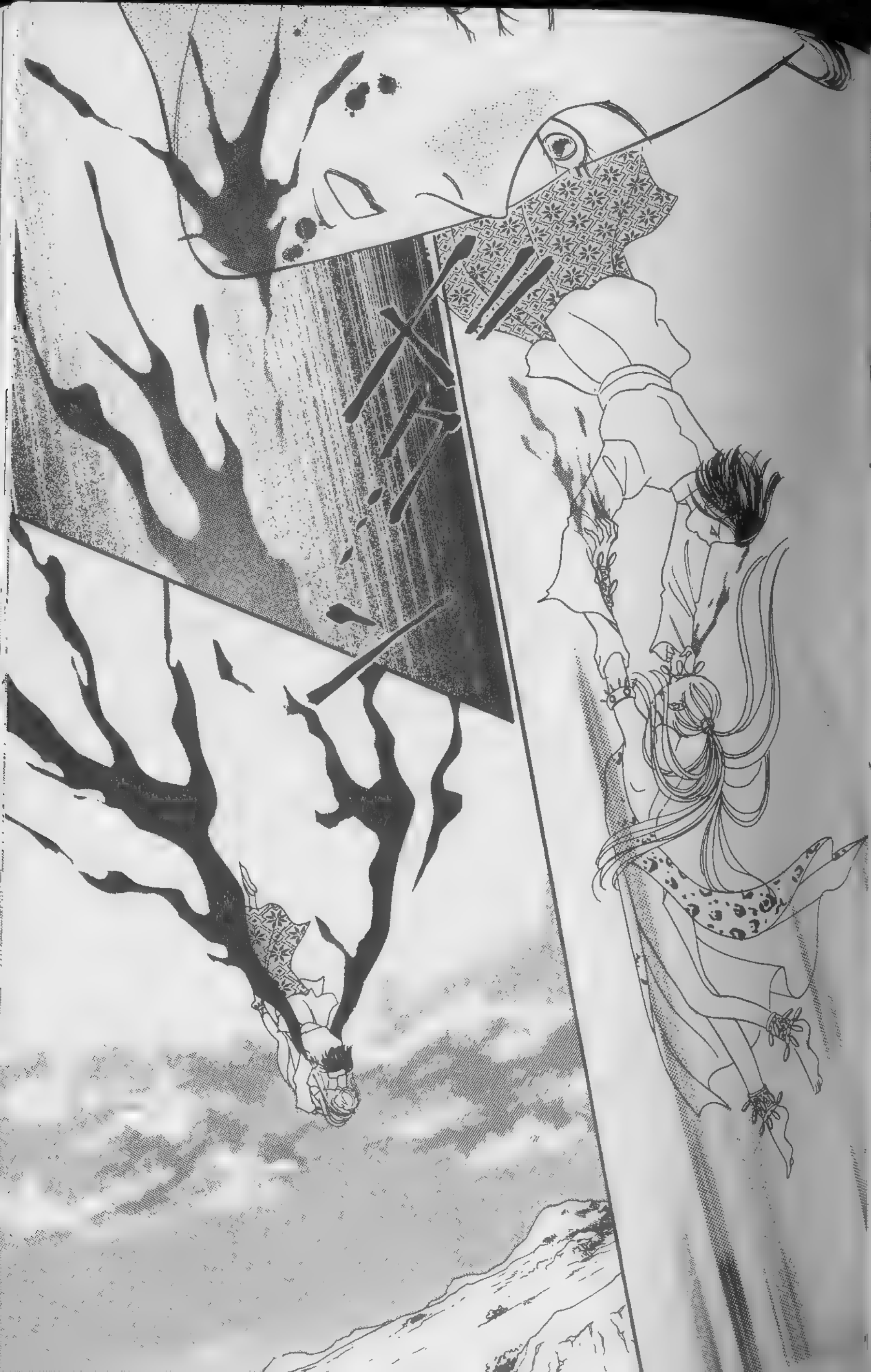

HATTON, STOP!!
DAMN CAT!!

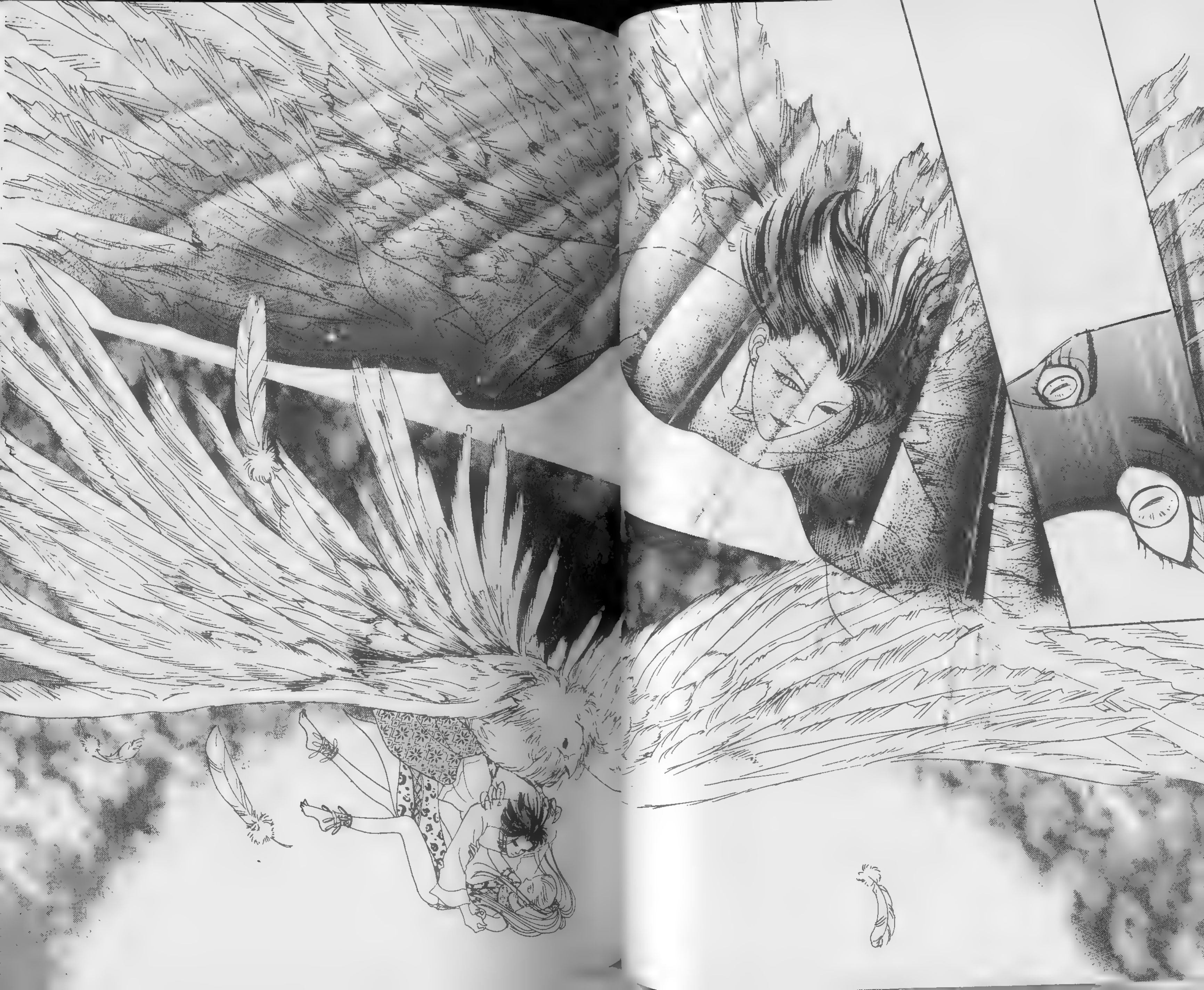

!?
TINA?!
OH GOD, NO!!!

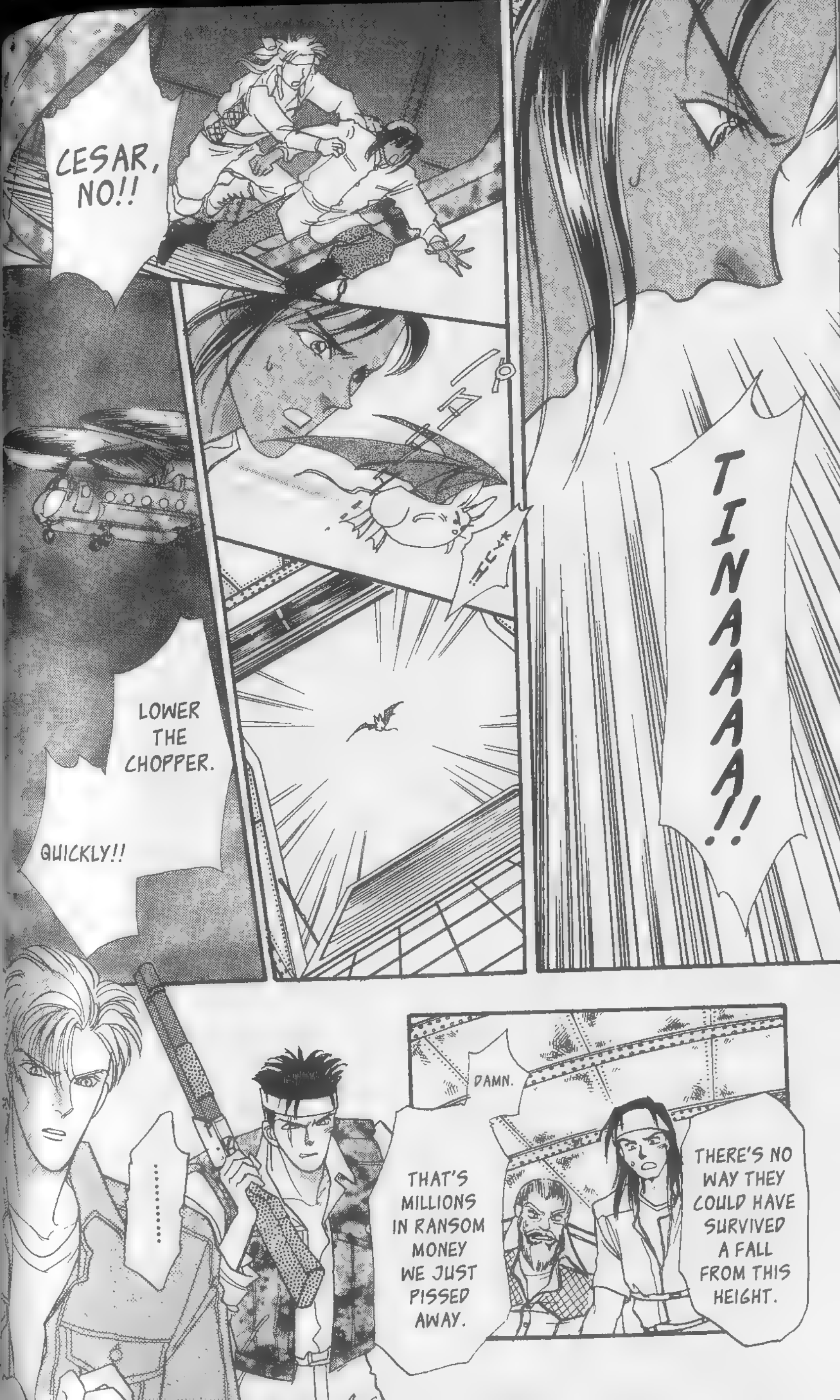

COUNT?!
ズル…
ドッ

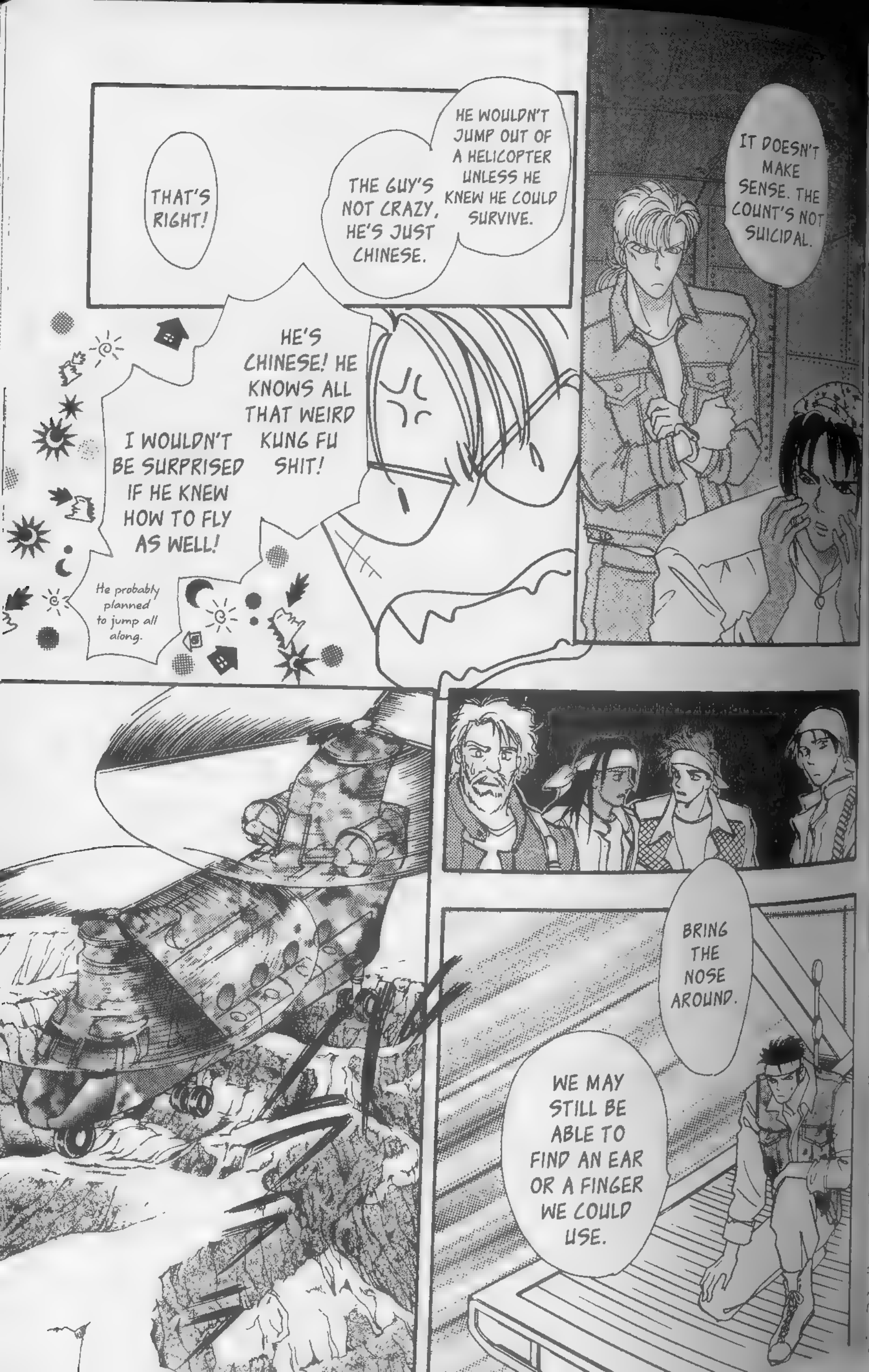

D, YOU CRAZY SON OF A BITCH!
TINA!!

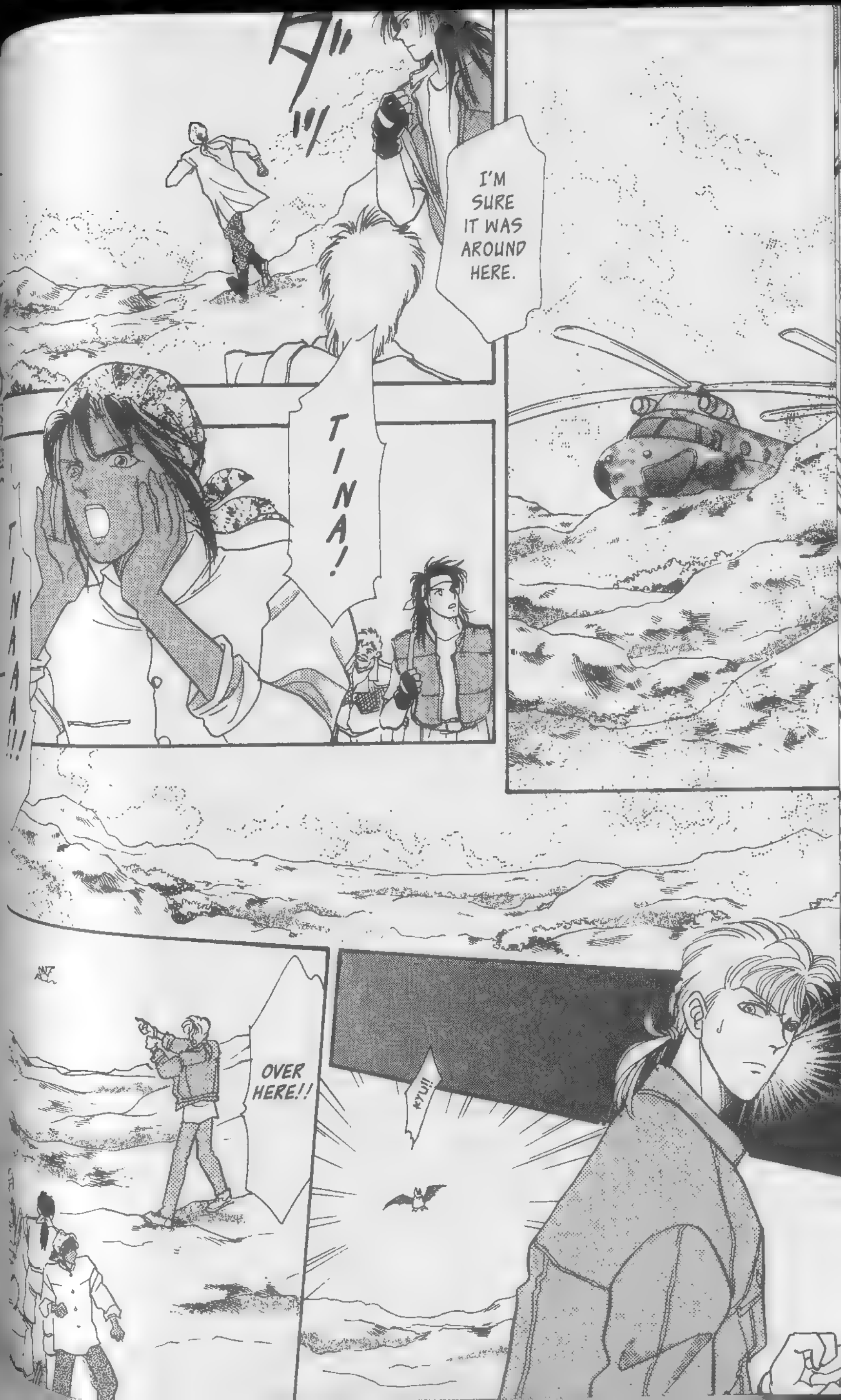

TINA!!
GRAB ON!!

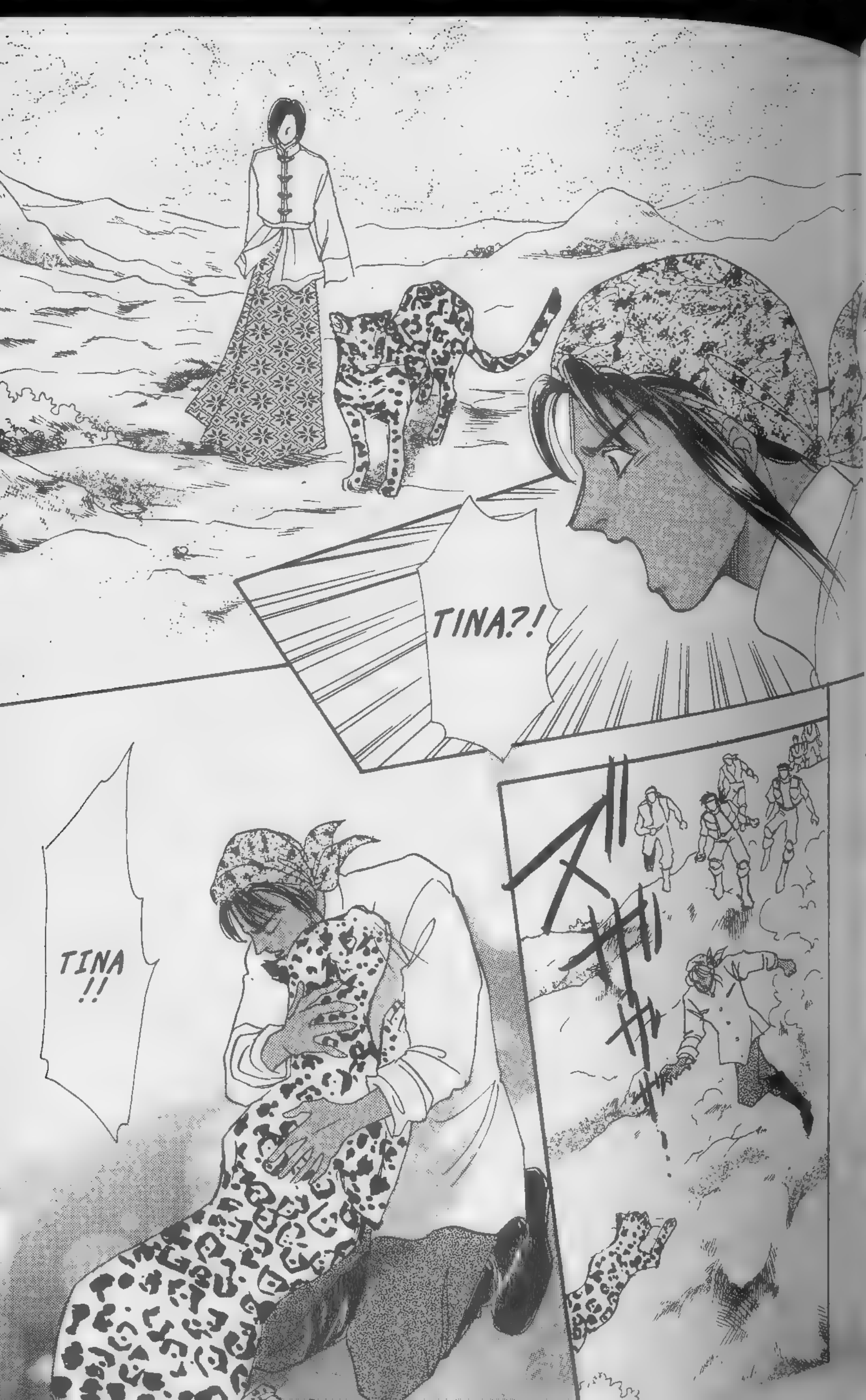


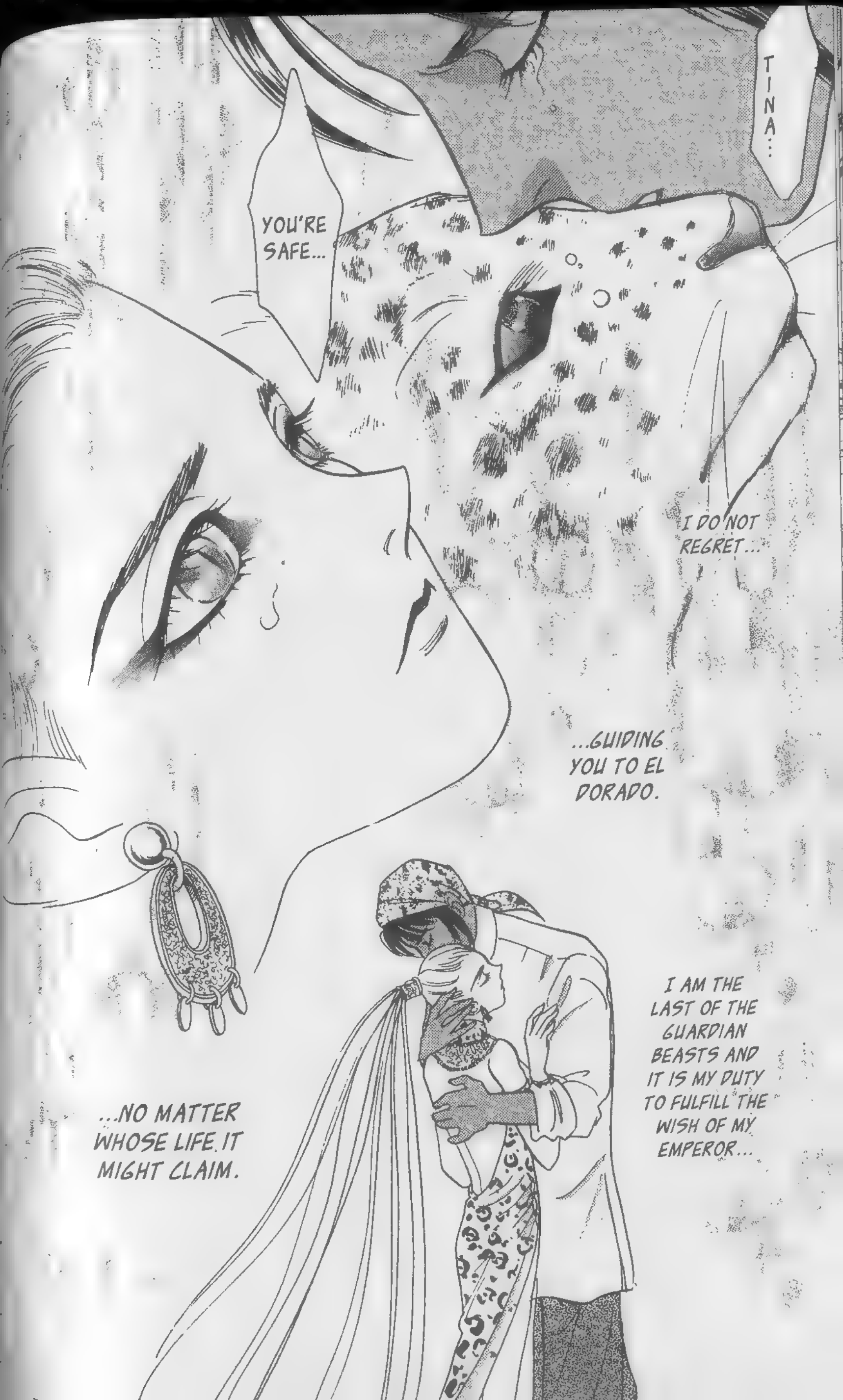


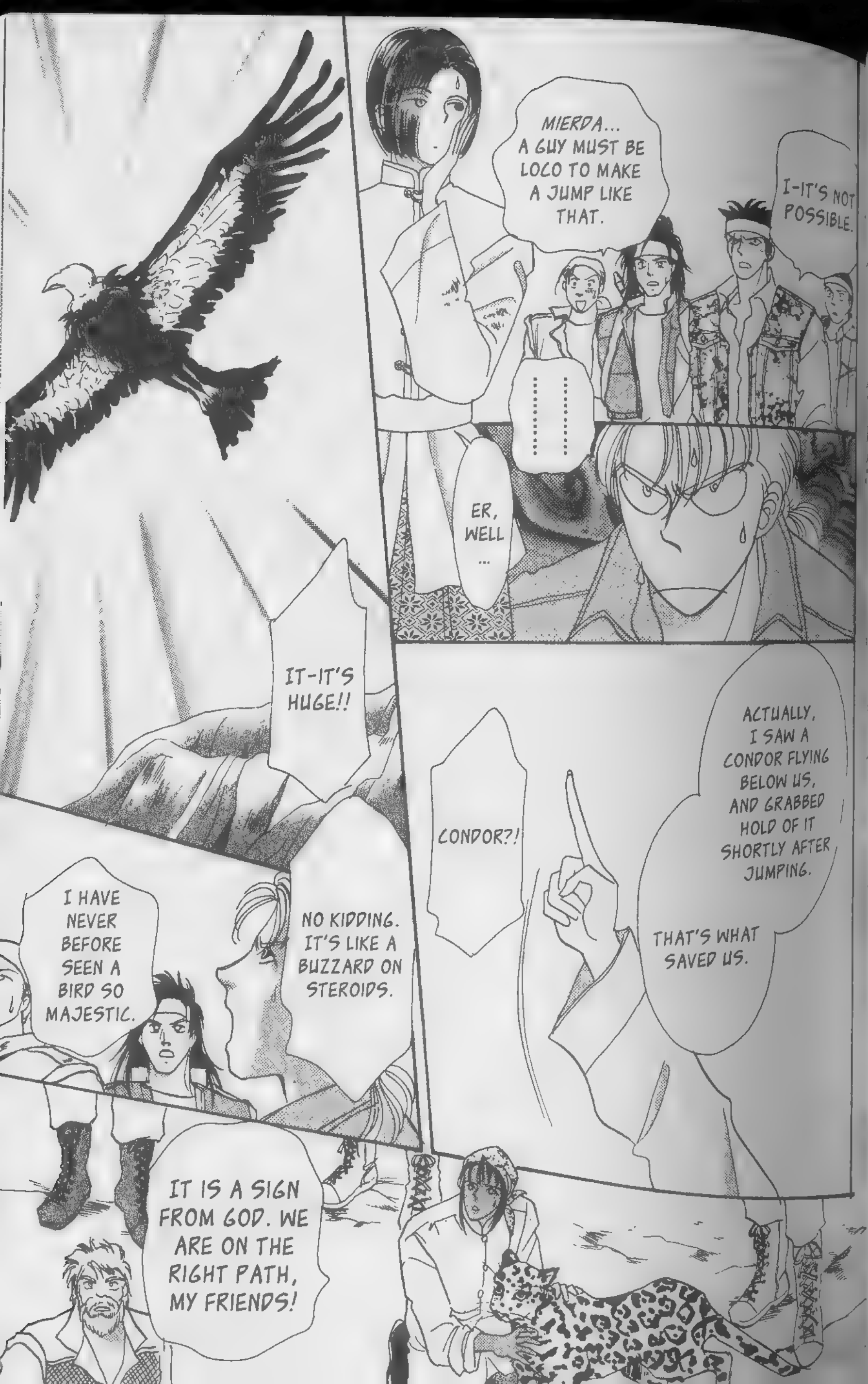

CESAR, NO!!
TINAAAAA!!
LOWER THE CHOPPER.
QUICKLY!!
THERE'S NO WAY THEY COULD HAVE SURVIVED A FALL FROM THIS HEIGHT.
DAMN.
THAT'S MILLIONS IN RANSOM MONEY WE JUST PISSED AWAY.
......

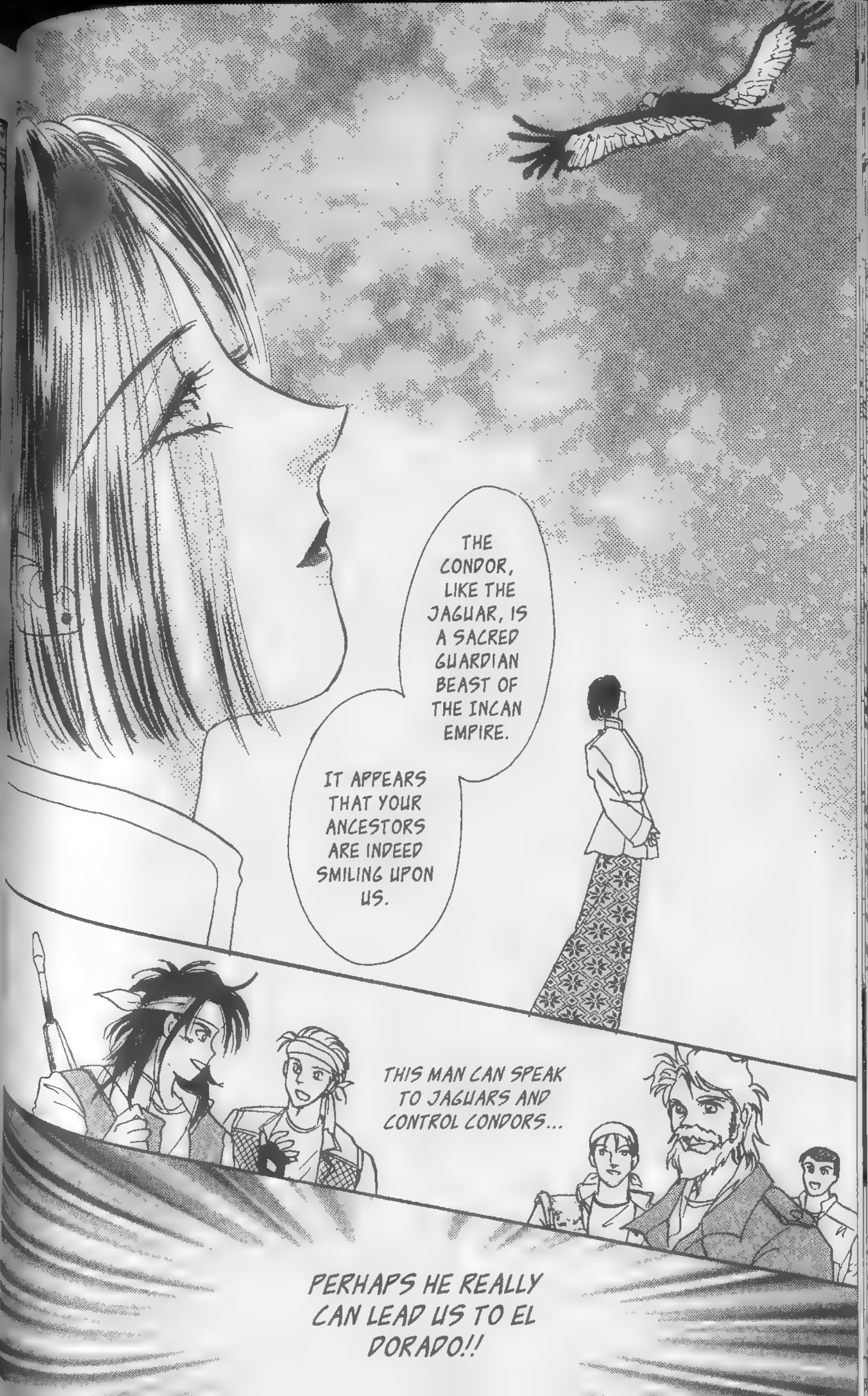

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. THE COUNT'S NOT SUICIDAL.
HE WOULDN'T JUMP OUT OF A HELICOPTER UNLESS HE KNEW HE COULD SURVIVE.
THE GUY'S NOT CRAZY, HE'S JUST CHINESE.
THAT'S RIGHT!
HE'S CHINESE! HE KNOWS ALL THAT WEIRD KUNG FU SHIT!
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF HE KNEW HOW TO FLY AS WELL!
He probably planned to jump all along.
BRING THE NOSE AROUND.
WE MAY STILL BE ABLE TO FIND AN EAR OR A FINGER WE COULD USE.

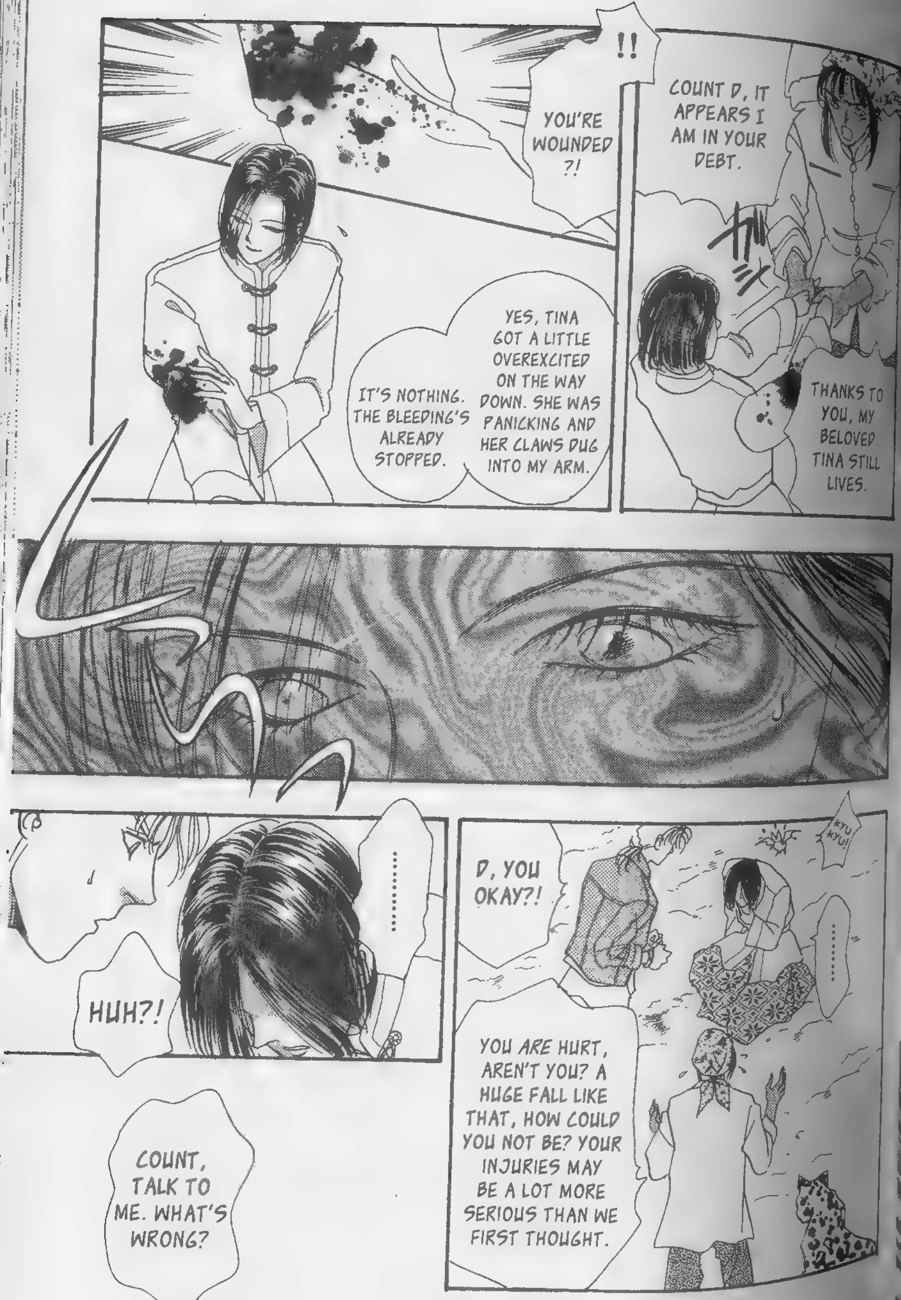

I'M SURE IT WAS AROUND HERE.
TINA!
TINAAAA!!!
OVER HERE!!
KYU!!

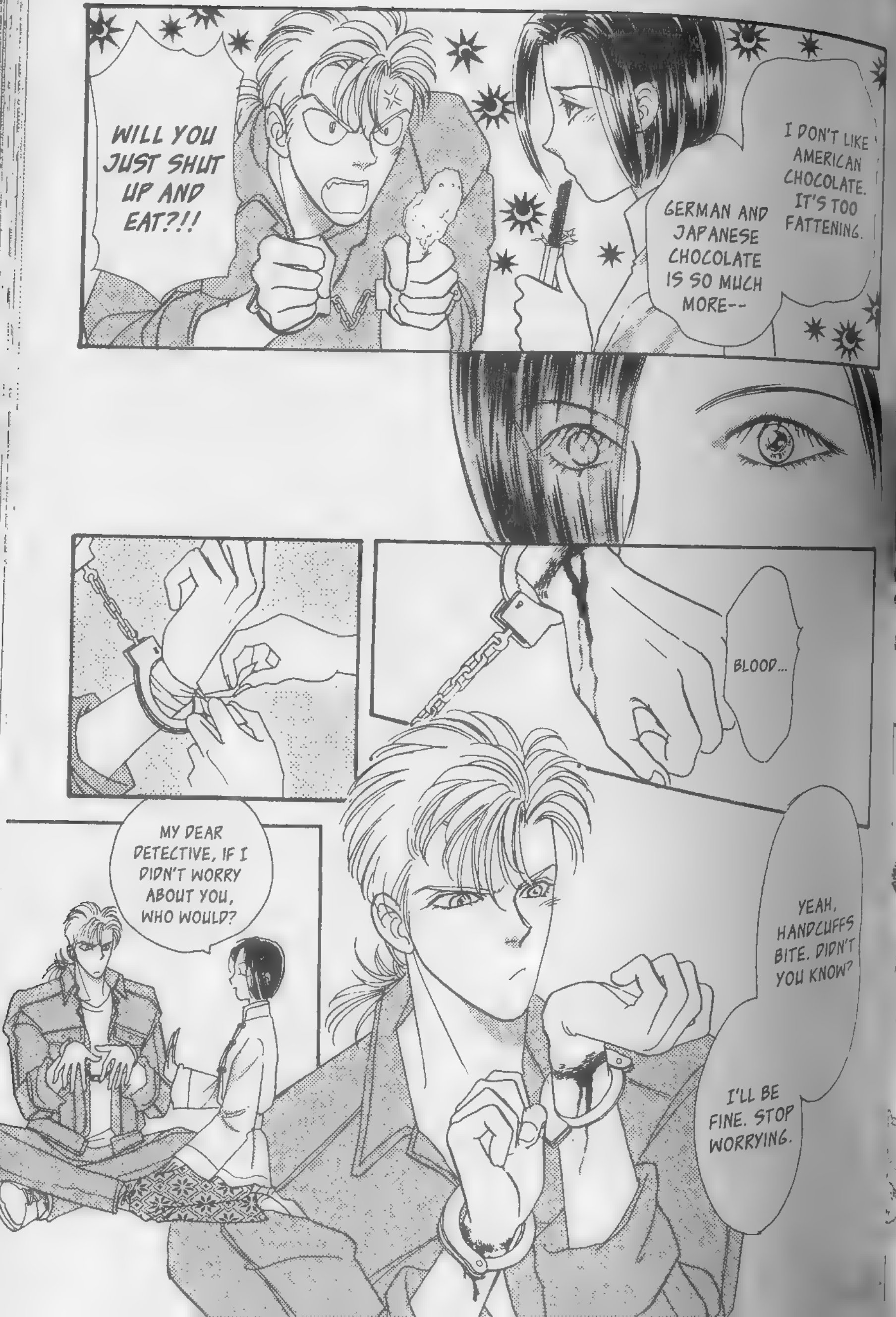

TINA?!
TINA !!

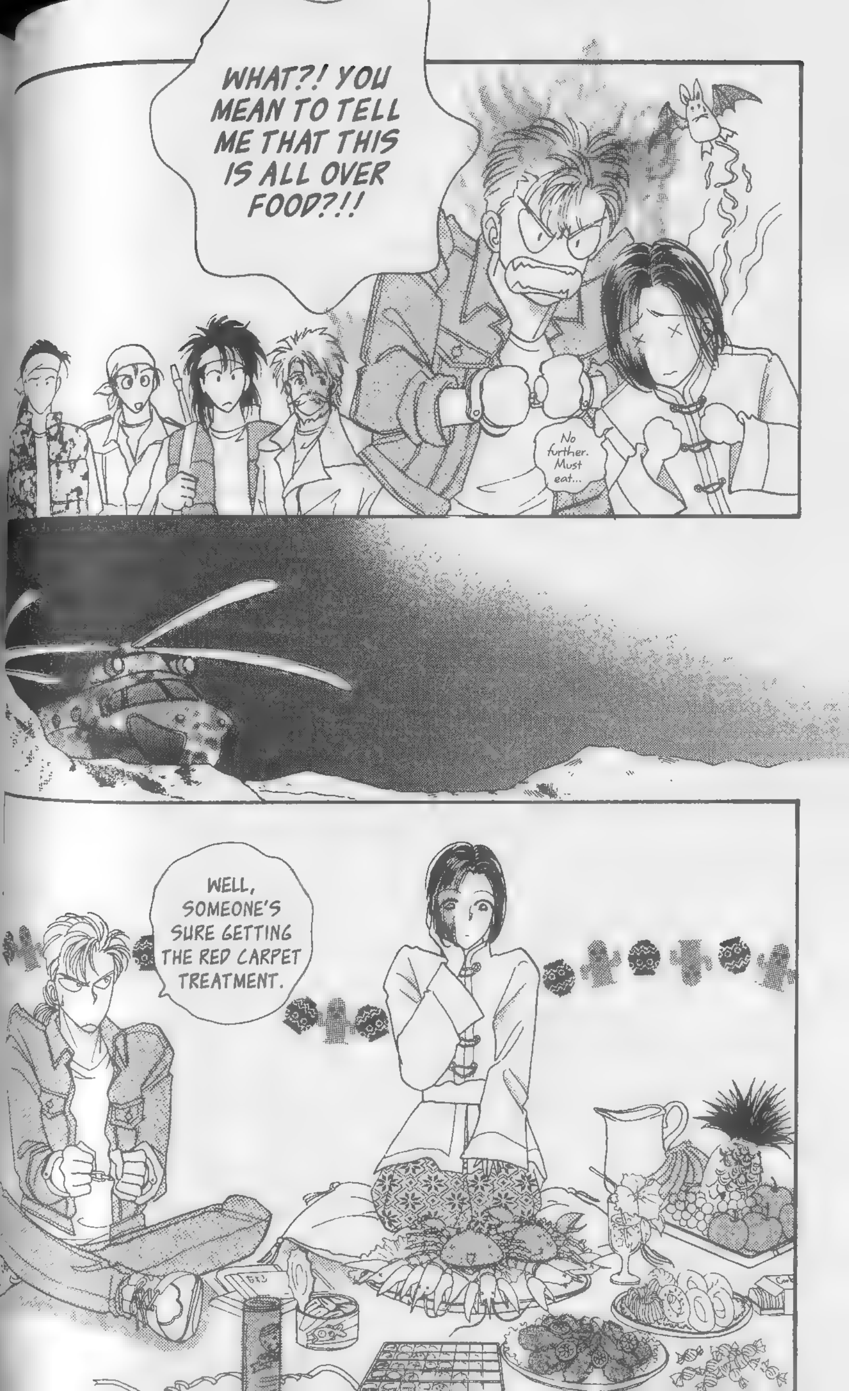

TINA...
YOU'RE SAFE...
I DO NOT REGRET...
...GUIDING YOU TO EL DORADO.
I AM THE LAST OF THE GUARDIAN BEASTS AND IT IS MY DUTY TO FULFILL THE WISH OF MY EMPEROR...
...NO MATTER WHOSE LIFE IT MIGHT CLAIM.

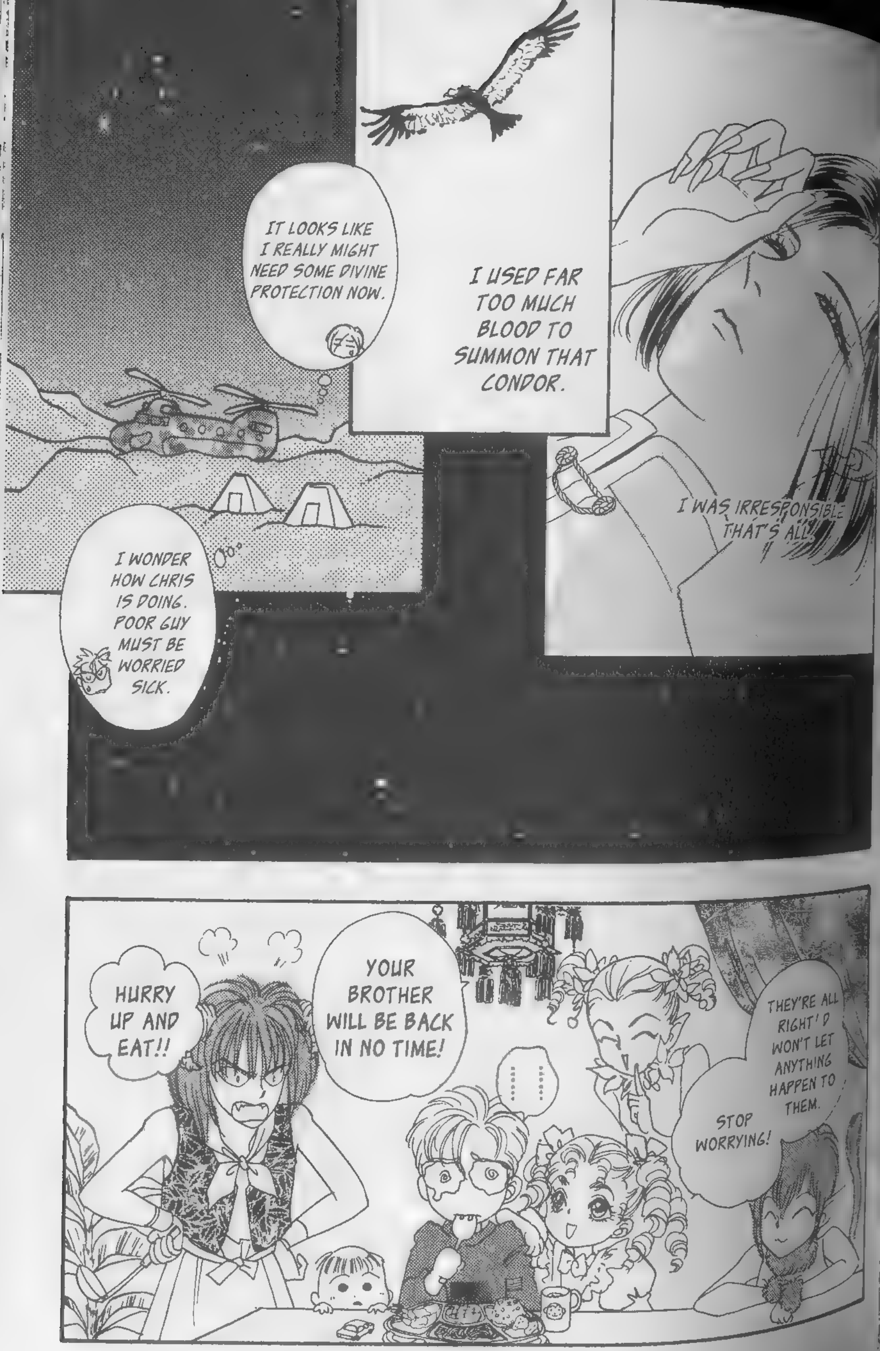

I-IT'S NOT POSSIBLE.
MIERDA... A GUY MUST BE LOCO TO MAKE A JUMP LIKE THAT.
......
ER, WELL ...
ACTUALLY, I SAW A CONDOR FLYING BELOW US, AND GRABBED HOLD OF IT SHORTLY AFTER JUMPING.
THAT'S WHAT SAVED US.
CONDOR?!
IT-IT'S HUGE!!
NO KIDDING. IT'S LIKE A BUZZARD ON STEROIDS.
I HAVE NEVER BEFORE SEEN A BIRD SO MAJESTIC.
IT IS A SIGN FROM GOD. WE ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH, MY FRIENDS!

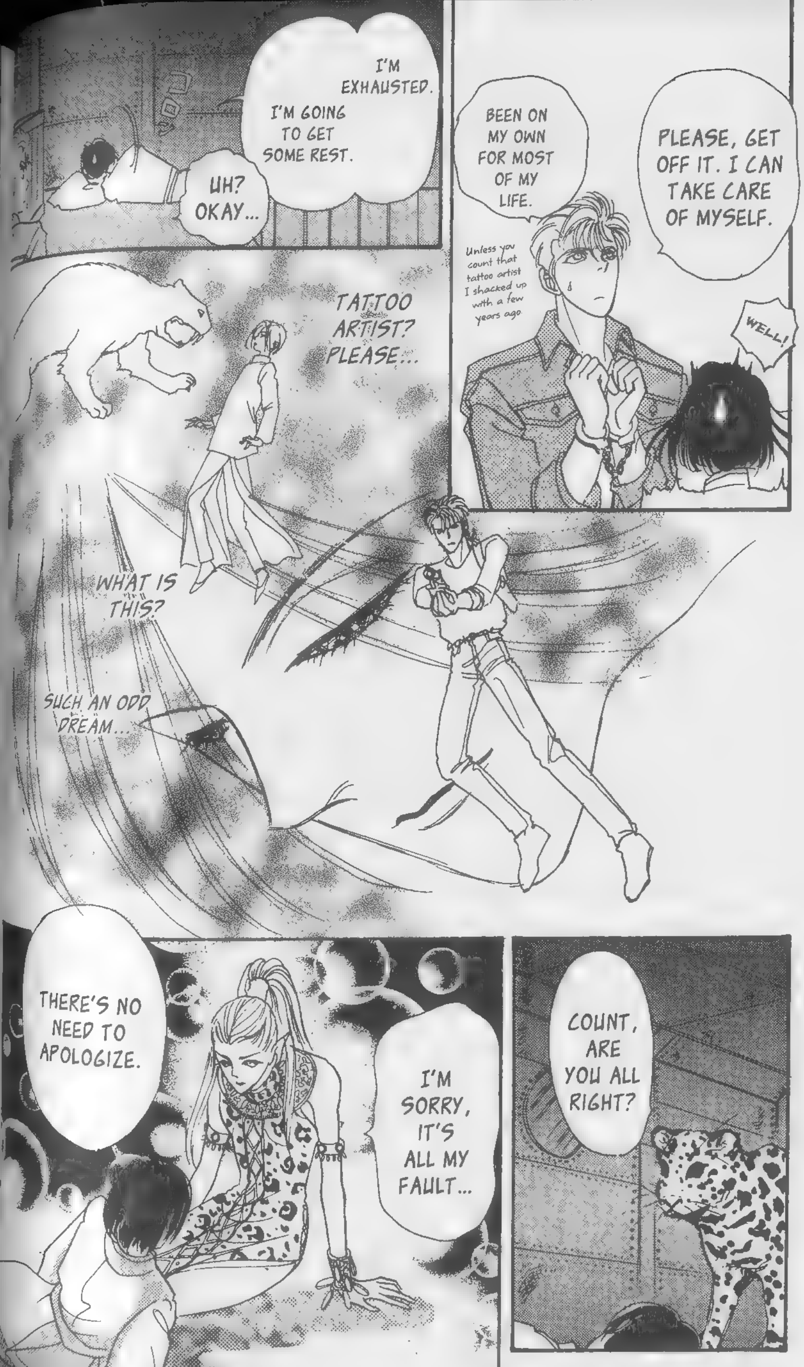

THE CONDOR, LIKE THE JAGUAR, IS A SACRED GUARDIAN BEAST OF THE INCAN EMPIRE.
IT APPEARS THAT YOUR ANCESTORS ARE INDEED SMILING UPON US.
THIS MAN CAN SPEAK TO JAGUARS AND CONTROL CONDORS...
PERHAPS HE REALLY CAN LEAD US TO EL DORADO!!

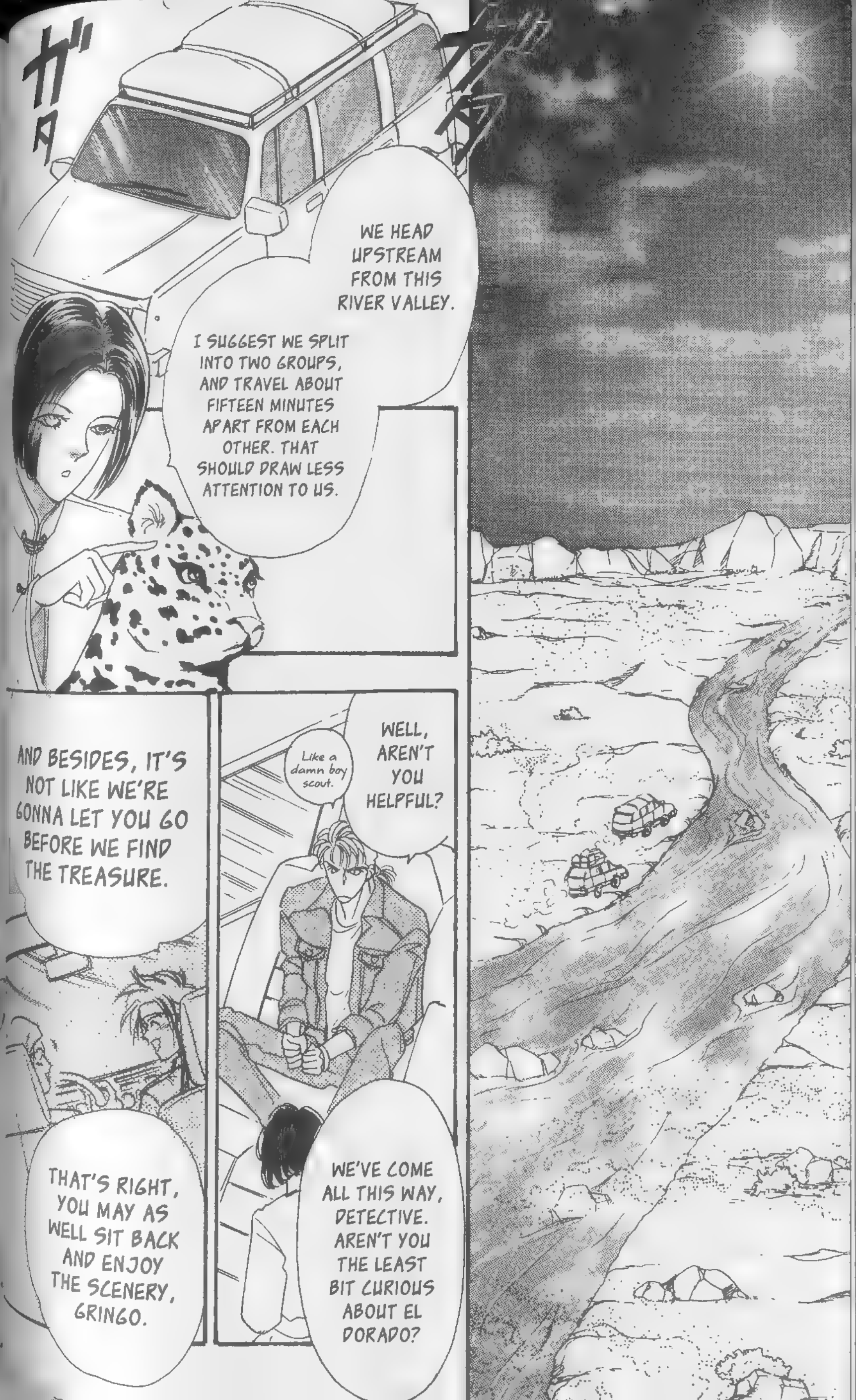

COUNT D, IT APPEARS I AM IN YOUR DEBT.
THANKS TO YOU, MY BELOVED TINA STILL LIVES.
!!
YOU'RE WOUNDED ?!
YES, TINA GOT A LITTLE OVEREXCITED ON THE WAY DOWN. SHE WAS PANICKING AND HER CLAWS DUG INTO MY ARM.
IT'S NOTHING. THE BLEEDING'S ALREADY STOPPED.
KYU KYU!
D, YOU OKAY?!
......
YOU ARE HURT, AREN'T YOU? A HUGE FALL LIKE THAT, HOW COULD YOU NOT BE? YOUR INJURIES MAY BE A LOT MORE SERIOUS THAN WE FIRST THOUGHT.
......
HUH?!
COUNT, TALK TO ME. WHAT'S WRONG?


WILL YOU JUST SHUT UP AND EAT?!!
I DON'T LIKE AMERICAN CHOCOLATE. IT'S TOO FATTENING.
GERMAN AND JAPANESE CHOCOLATE IS SO MUCH MORE--
BLOOD...
YEAH, HANDCUFFS BITE. DIDN'T YOU KNOW?
I'LL BE FINE. STOP WORRYING.
MY DEAR DETECTIVE, IF I DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT YOU, WHO WOULD?


WHAT?! YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THAT THIS IS ALL OVER FOOD?!!
No further. Must eat...
WELL, SOMEONE'S SURE GETTING THE RED CARPET TREATMENT.


IT LOOKS LIKE I REALLY MIGHT NEED SOME DIVINE PROTECTION NOW.
I USED FAR TOO MUCH BLOOD TO SUMMON THAT CONDOR.
I WAS IRRESPONSIBLE. THAT'S ALL.
I WONDER HOW CHRIS IS DOING. POOR GUY MUST BE WORRIED SICK.
HURRY UP AND EAT!!
YOUR BROTHER WILL BE BACK IN NO TIME!
......
THEY'RE ALL RIGHT! I'D WON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO THEM.
STOP WORRYING!


I'M EXHAUSTED.
I'M GOING TO GET SOME REST.
UH? OKAY...
PLEASE, GET OFF IT. I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.
BEEN ON MY OWN FOR MOST OF MY LIFE.
Unless you count that tattoo artist I shacked up with a few years ago
WELL!
TATTOO ARTIST? PLEASE...
WHAT IS THIS?
SUCH AN ODD DREAM...
THERE'S NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE.
I'M SORRY, IT'S ALL MY FAULT...
COUNT, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?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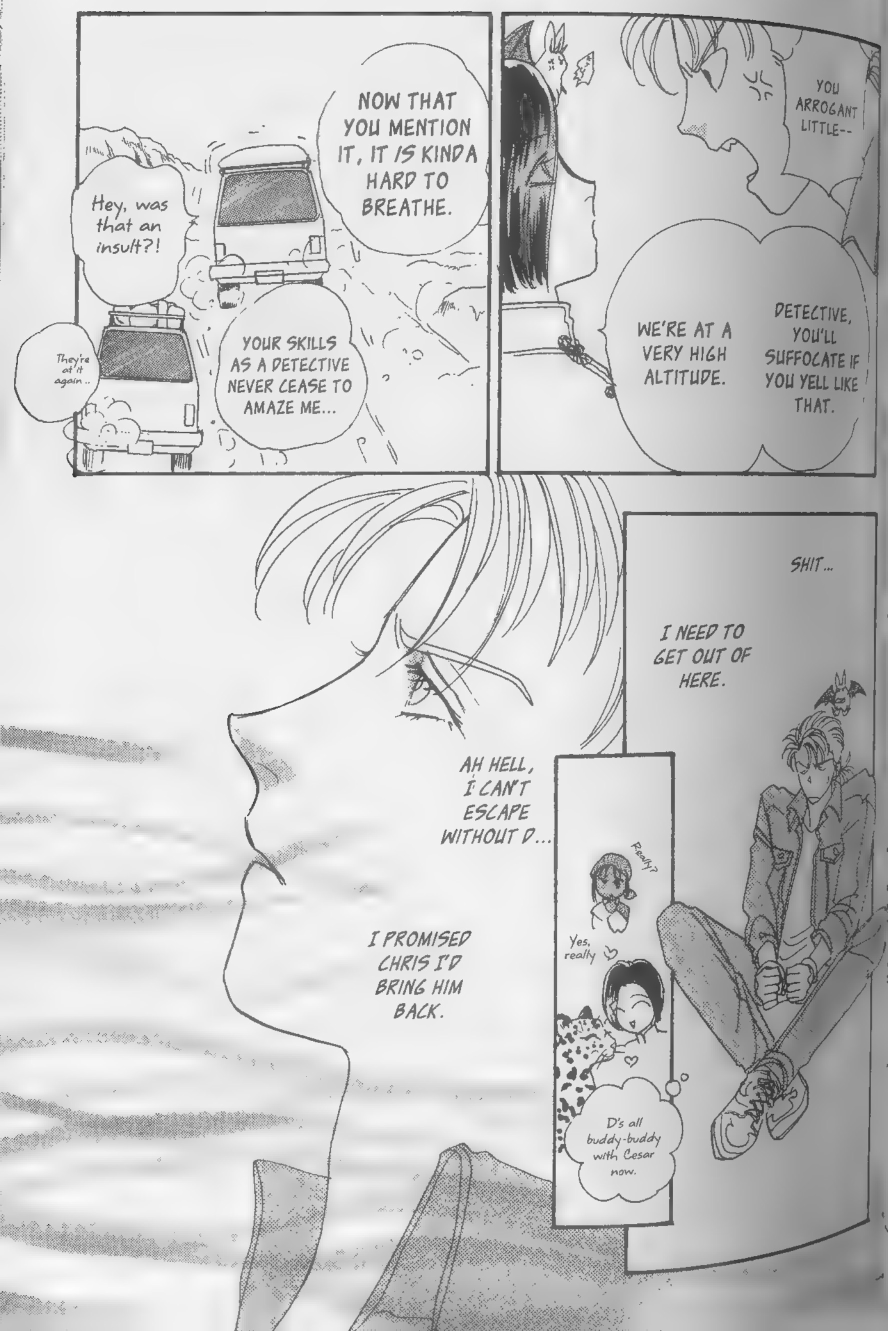
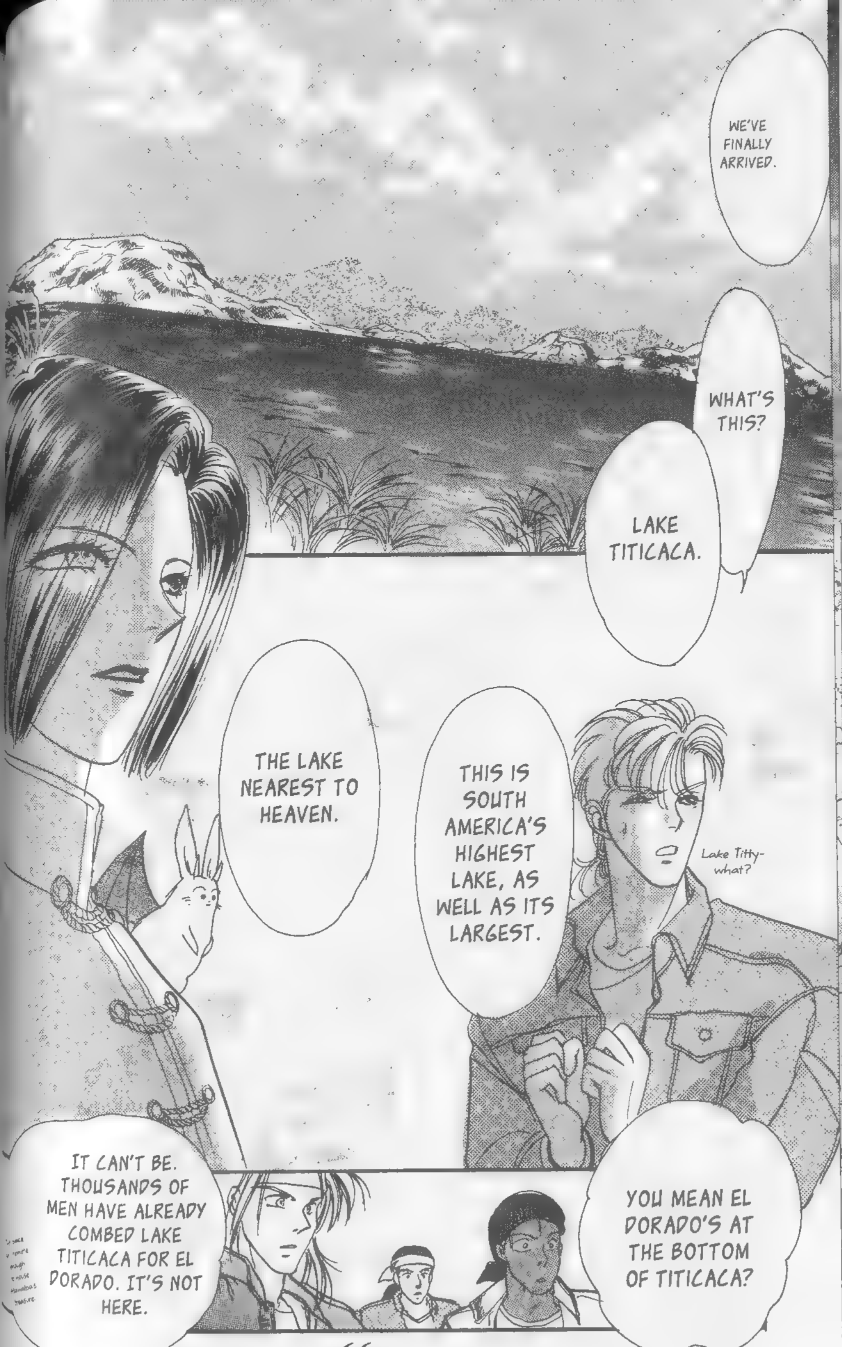
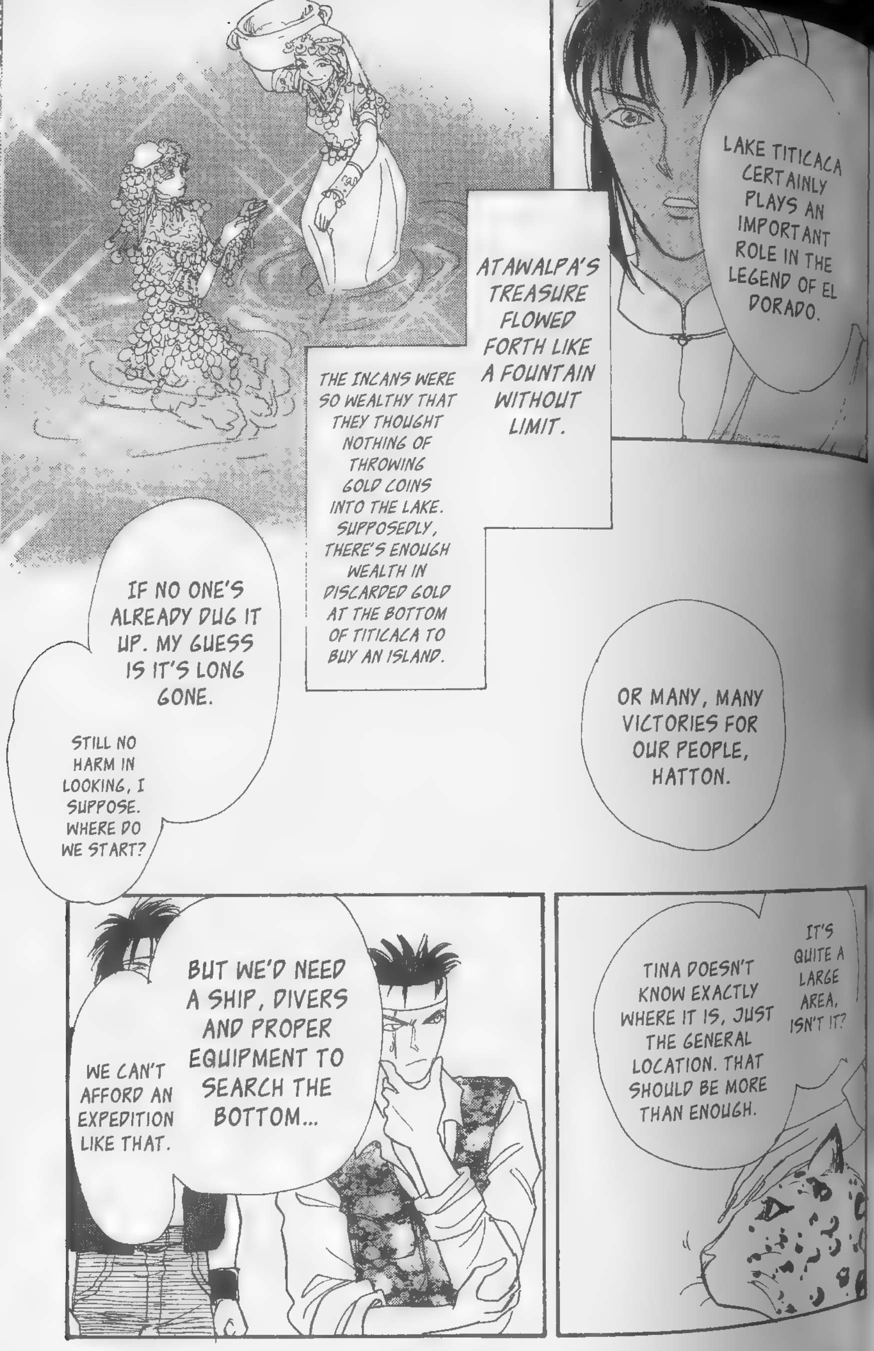
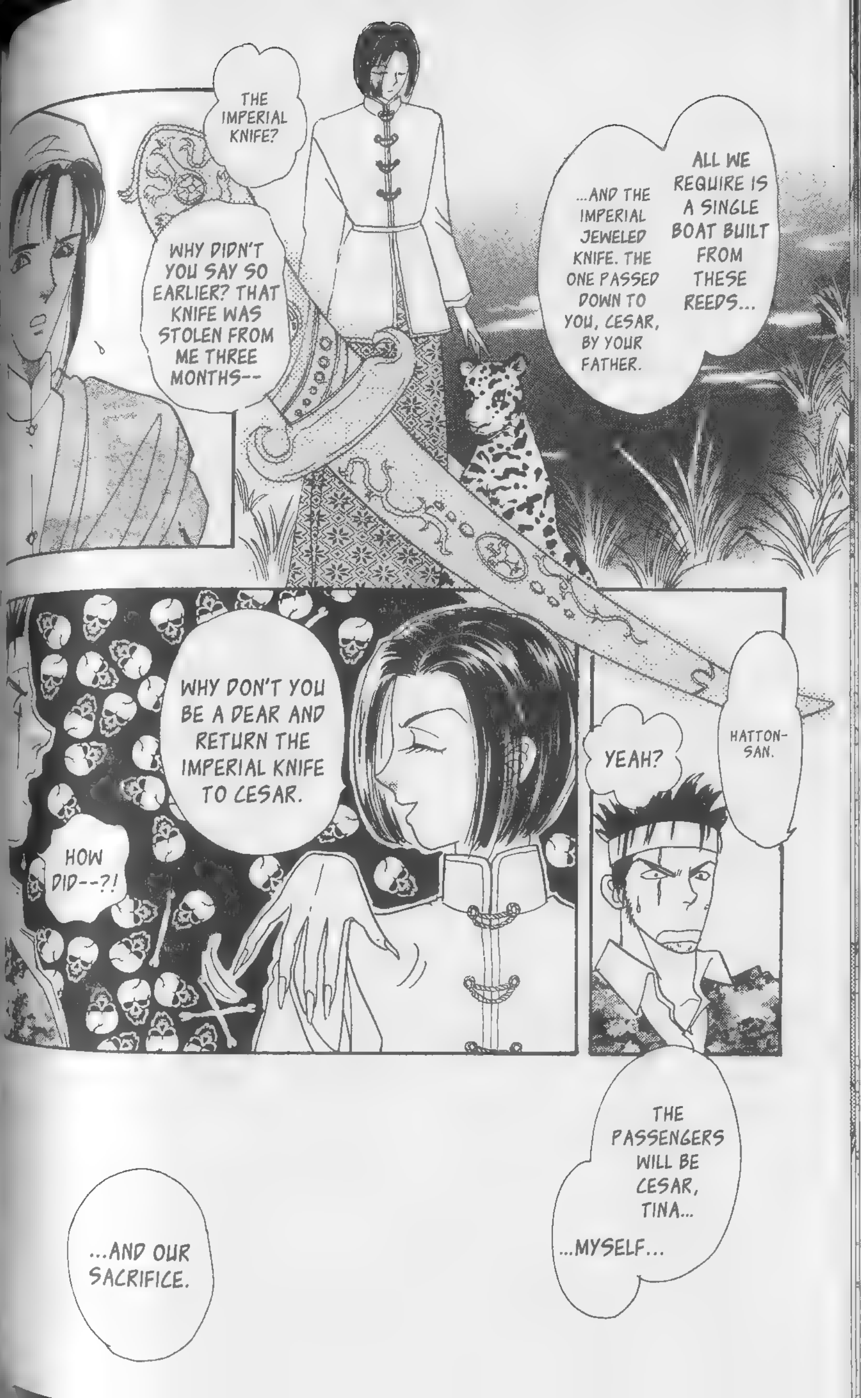
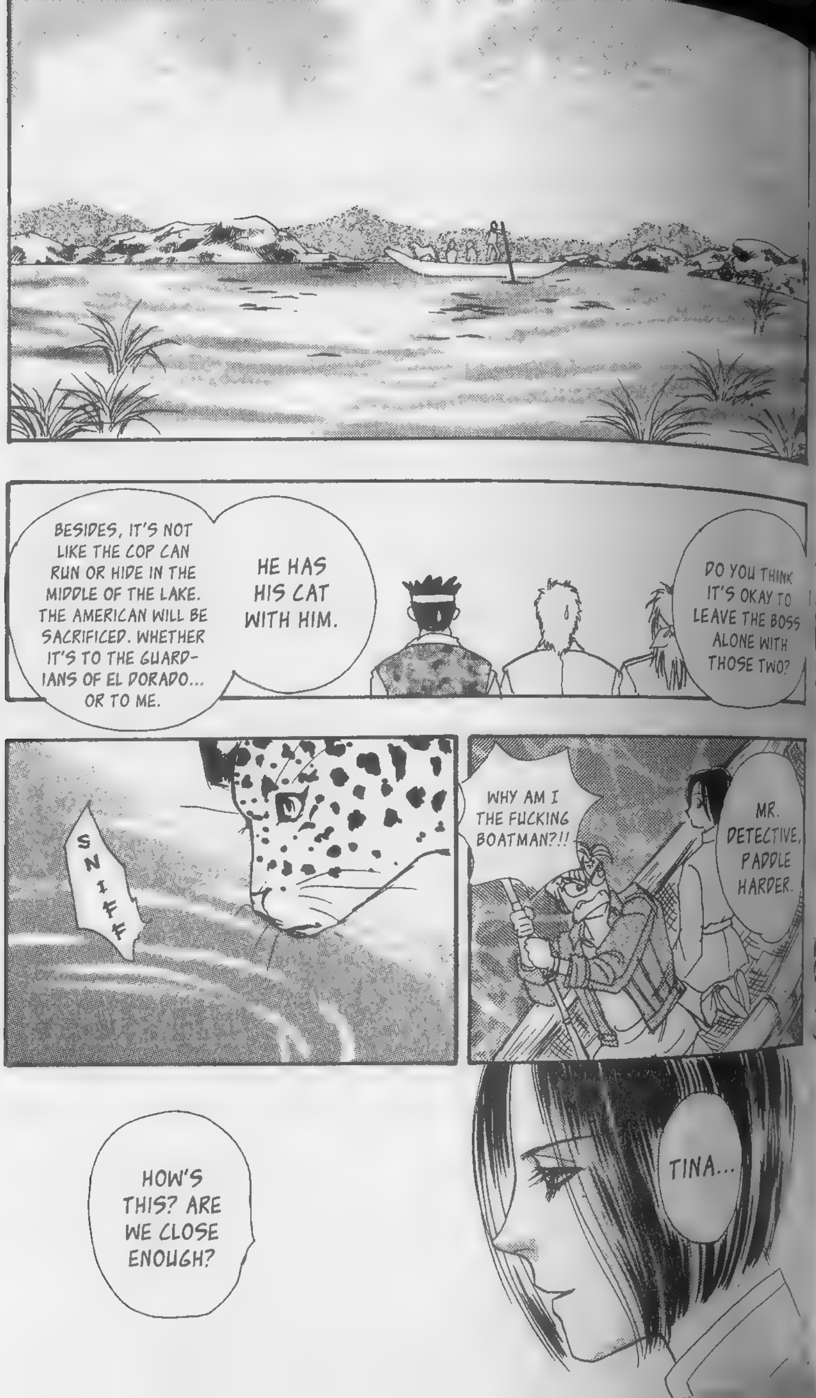
WE HEAD UPSTREAM FROM THIS RIVER VALLEY.
I SUGGEST WE SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS, AND TRAVEL ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES APART FROM EACH OTHER. THAT SHOULD DRAW LESS ATTENTION TO US.
WELL, AREN'T YOU HELPFUL?
Like a damn boy scout.
WE'VE COME ALL THIS WAY, DETECTIVE. AREN'T YOU THE LEAST BIT CURIOUS ABOUT EL DORADO?
AND BESIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE GONNA LET YOU GO BEFORE WE FIND THE TREASURE.
THAT'S RIGHT, YOU MAY AS WELL SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE SCENERY, GRINGO.

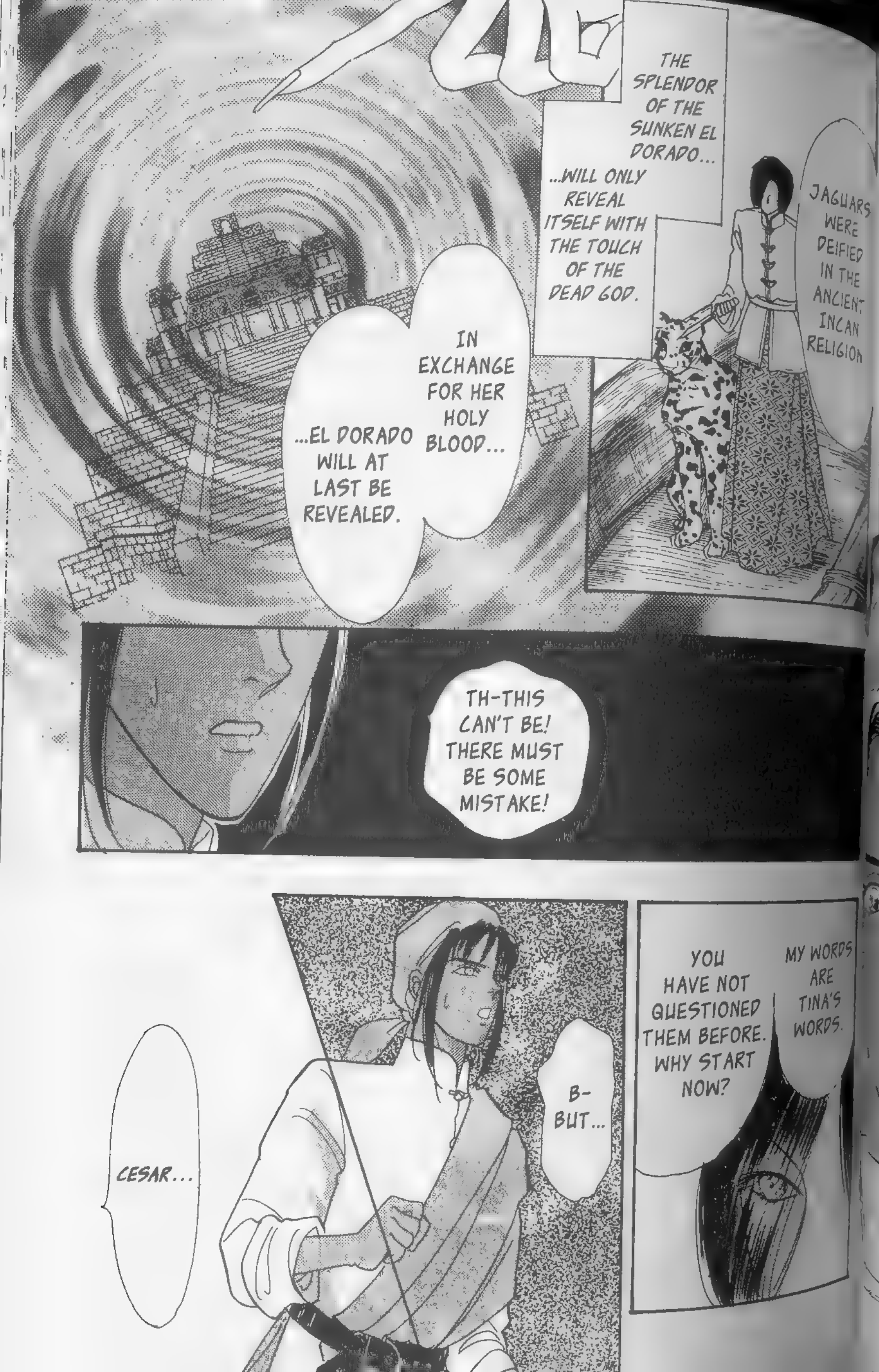

YOU ARROGANT LITTLE--
DETECTIVE, YOU'LL SUFFOCATE IF YOU YELL LIKE THAT.
WE'RE AT A VERY HIGH ALTITUDE.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, IT IS KINDA HARD TO BREATHE.
Hey, was that an insult?!
YOUR SKILLS AS A DETECTIVE NEVER CEASE TO AMAZE ME...
They're at it again...
SHIT...
I NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE.
AH HELL, I CAN'T ESCAPE WITHOUT D...
I PROMISED CHRIS I'D BRING HIM BACK.
Really?
Yes, really ♡
D's all buddy-buddy with Cesar now.

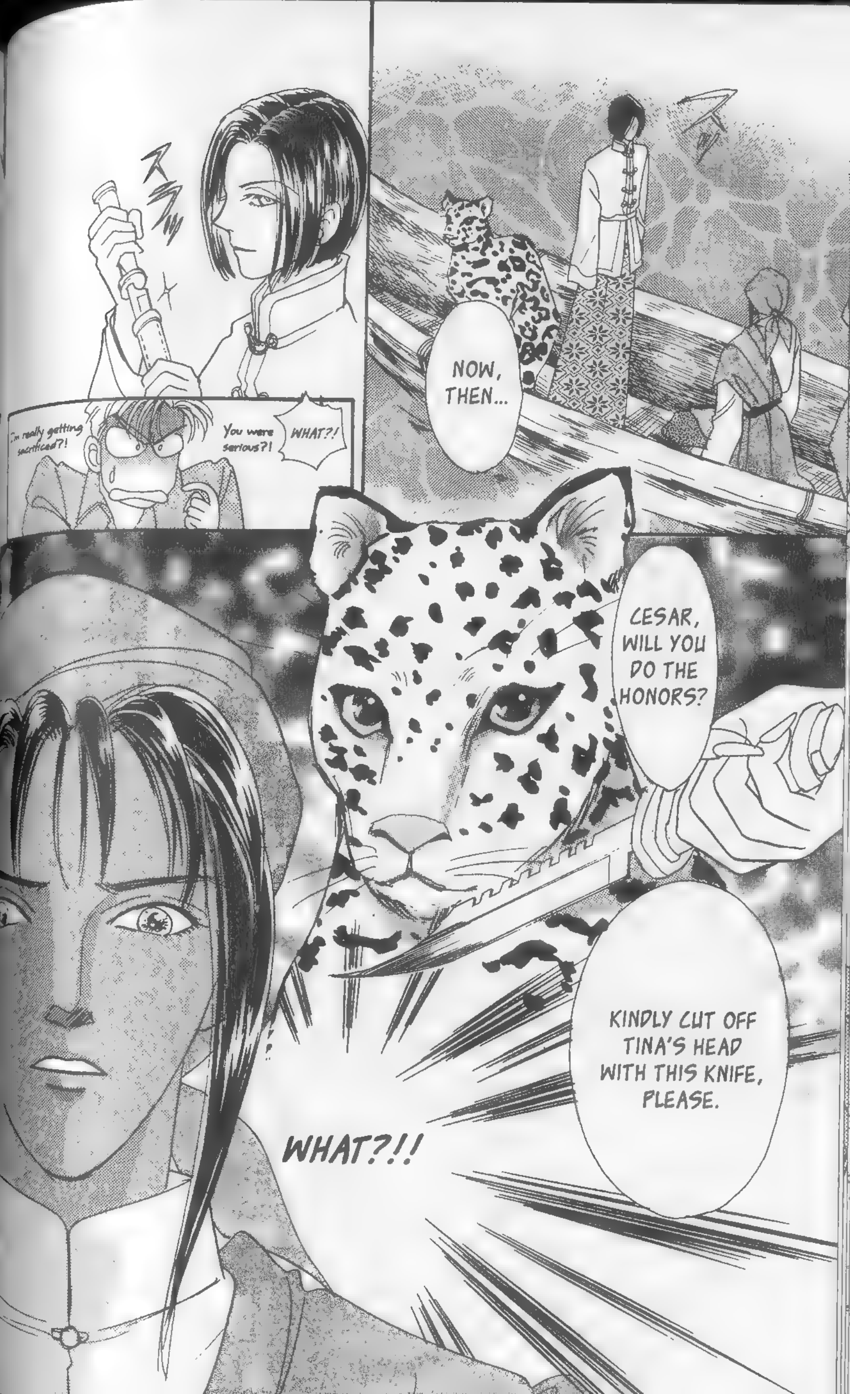

WE'VE FINALLY ARRIVED.
WHAT'S THIS?
LAKE TITICACA.
THIS IS SOUTH AMERICA'S HIGHEST LAKE, AS WELL AS ITS LARGEST.
Lake Titty-what?
THE LAKE NEAREST TO HEAVEN.
YOU MEAN EL DORADO'S AT THE BOTTOM OF TITICACA?
IT CAN'T BE. THOUSANDS OF MEN HAVE ALREADY COMBED LAKE TITICACA FOR EL DORADO. IT'S NOT HERE.

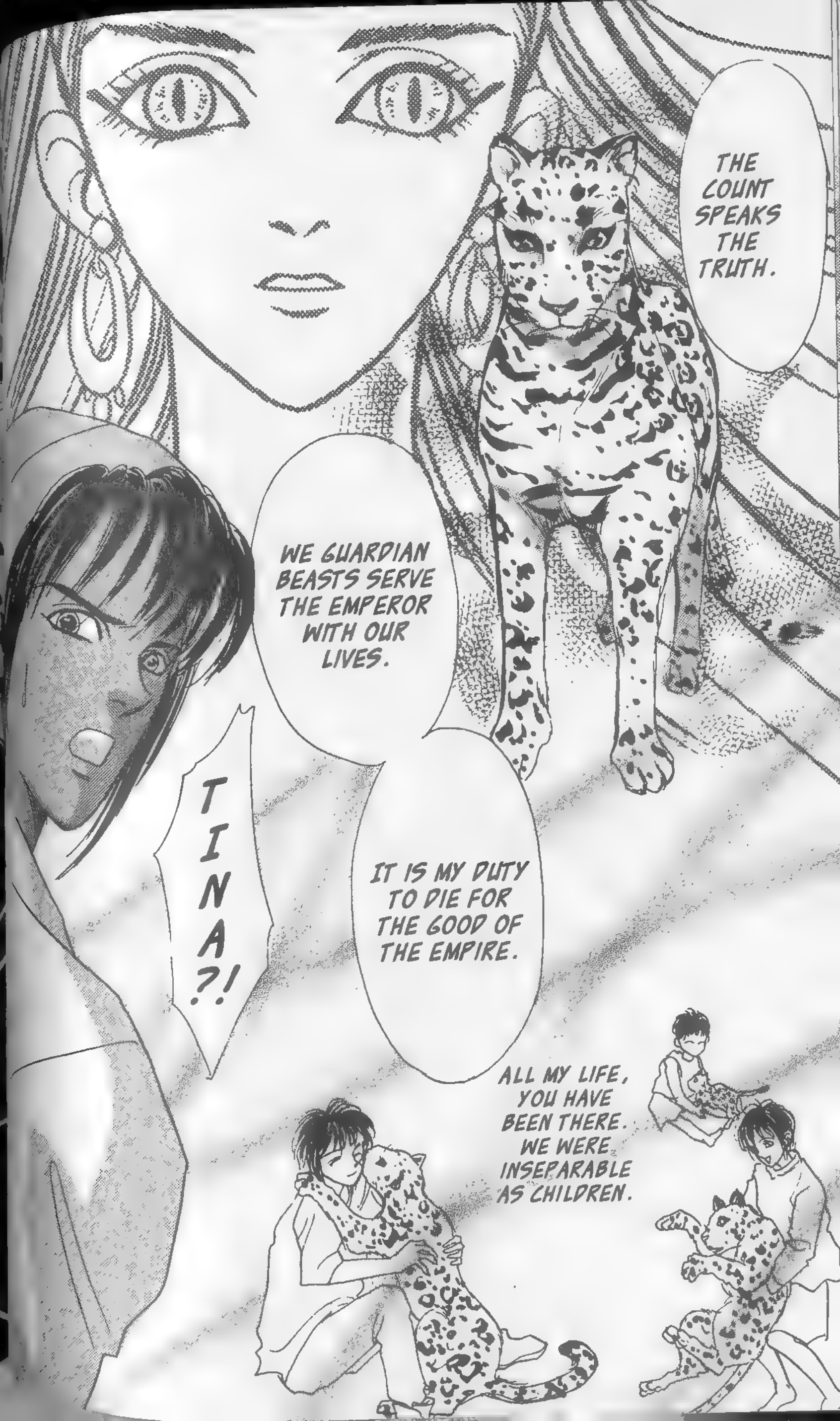

LAKE TITICACA CERTAINLY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE LEGEND OF EL DORADO.
ATAWALPA'S TREASURE FLOWED FORTH LIKE A FOUNTAIN WITHOUT LIMIT.
THE INCANS WERE SO WEALTHY THAT THEY THOUGHT NOTHING OF THROWING GOLD COINS INTO THE LAKE. SUPPOSEDLY, THERE'S ENOUGH WEALTH IN DISCARDED GOLD AT THE BOTTOM OF TITICACA TO BUY AN ISLAND.
OR MANY, MANY VICTORIES FOR OUR PEOPLE, HATTON.
IF NO ONE'S ALREADY DUG IT UP. MY GUESS IS IT'S LONG GONE.
STILL NO HARM IN LOOKING, I SUPPOSE. WHERE DO WE START?
IT'S QUITE A LARGE AREA, ISN'T IT?
TINA DOESN'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE IT IS, JUST THE GENERAL LOCATION. THAT SHOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH.
BUT WE'D NEED A SHIP, DIVERS AND PROPER EQUIPMENT TO SEARCH THE BOTTOM...
WE CAN'T AFFORD AN EXPEDITION LIKE THAT.

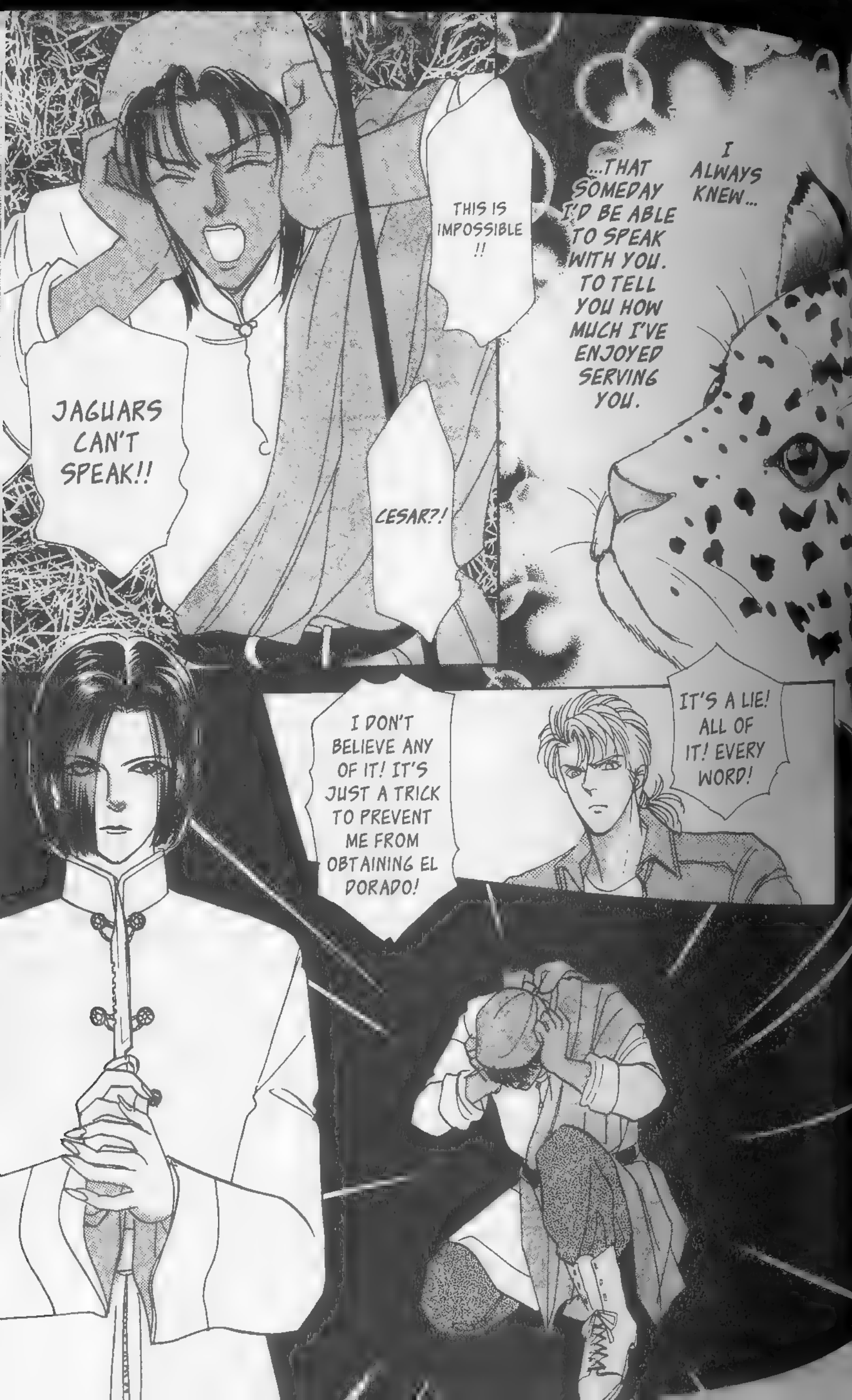

ALL WE REQUIRE IS A SINGLE BOAT BUILT FROM THESE REEDS...
...AND THE IMPERIAL JEWELED KNIFE. THE ONE PASSED DOWN TO YOU, CESAR, BY YOUR FATHER.
THE IMPERIAL KNIFE?
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO EARLIER? THAT KNIFE WAS STOLEN FROM ME THREE MONTHS--
HATTON-SAN.
YEAH?
WHY DON'T YOU BE A DEAR AND RETURN THE IMPERIAL KNIFE TO CESAR.
HOW DID--?!
THE PASSENGERS WILL BE CESAR, TINA...
...MYSELF...
...AND OUR SACRIFICE.

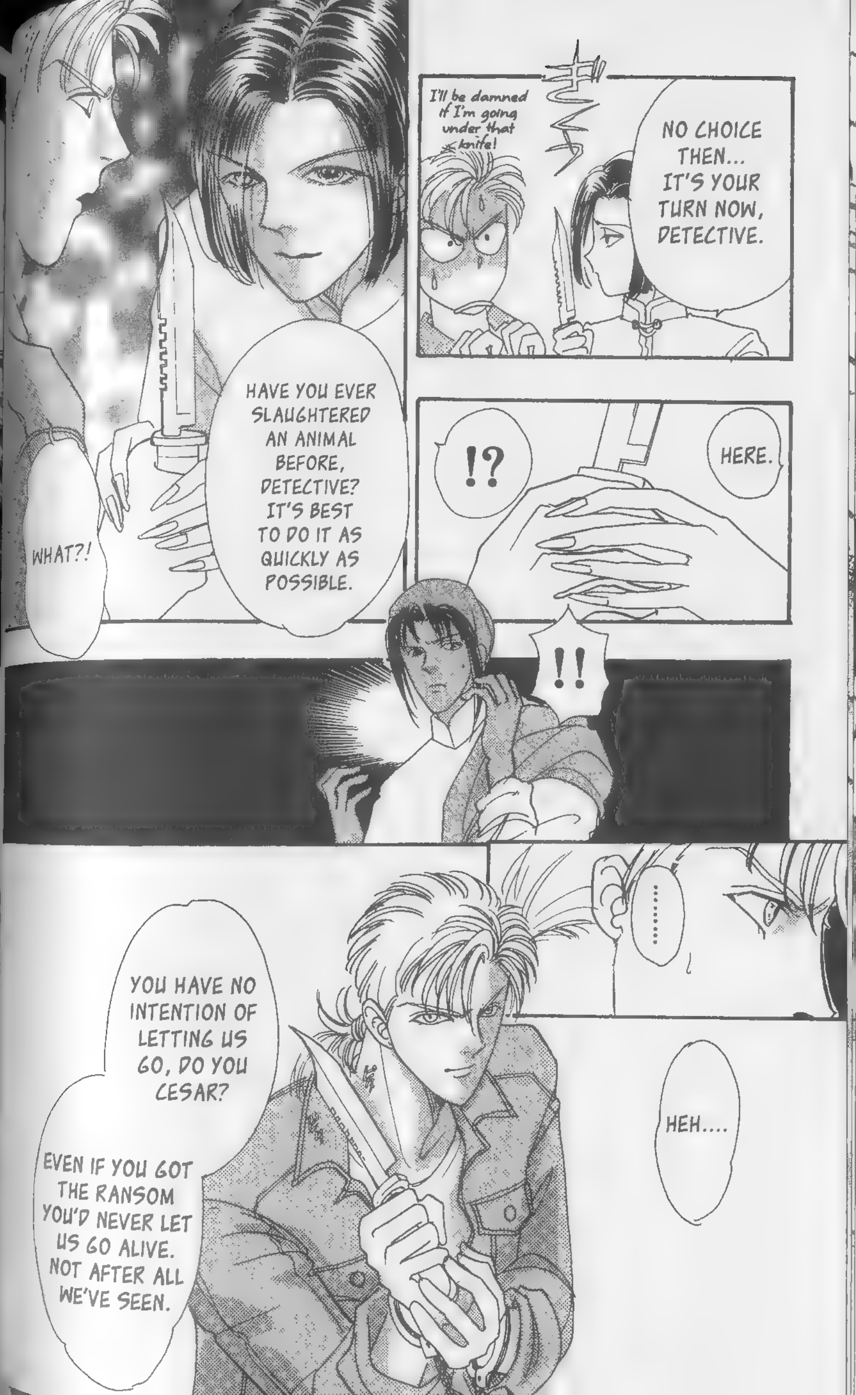

DO YOU THINK IT'S OKAY TO LEAVE THE BOSS ALONE WITH THOSE TWO?
HE HAS HIS CAT WITH HIM.
BESIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE THE COP CAN RUN OR HIDE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAKE. THE AMERICAN WILL BE SACRIFICED. WHETHER IT'S TO THE GUARDIANS OF EL DORADO... OR TO ME.
MR. DETECTIVE, PADDLE HARDER.
WHY AM I THE FUCKING BOATMAN?!!
SNIFF
TINA...
HOW'S THIS? ARE WE CLOSE ENOUGH?

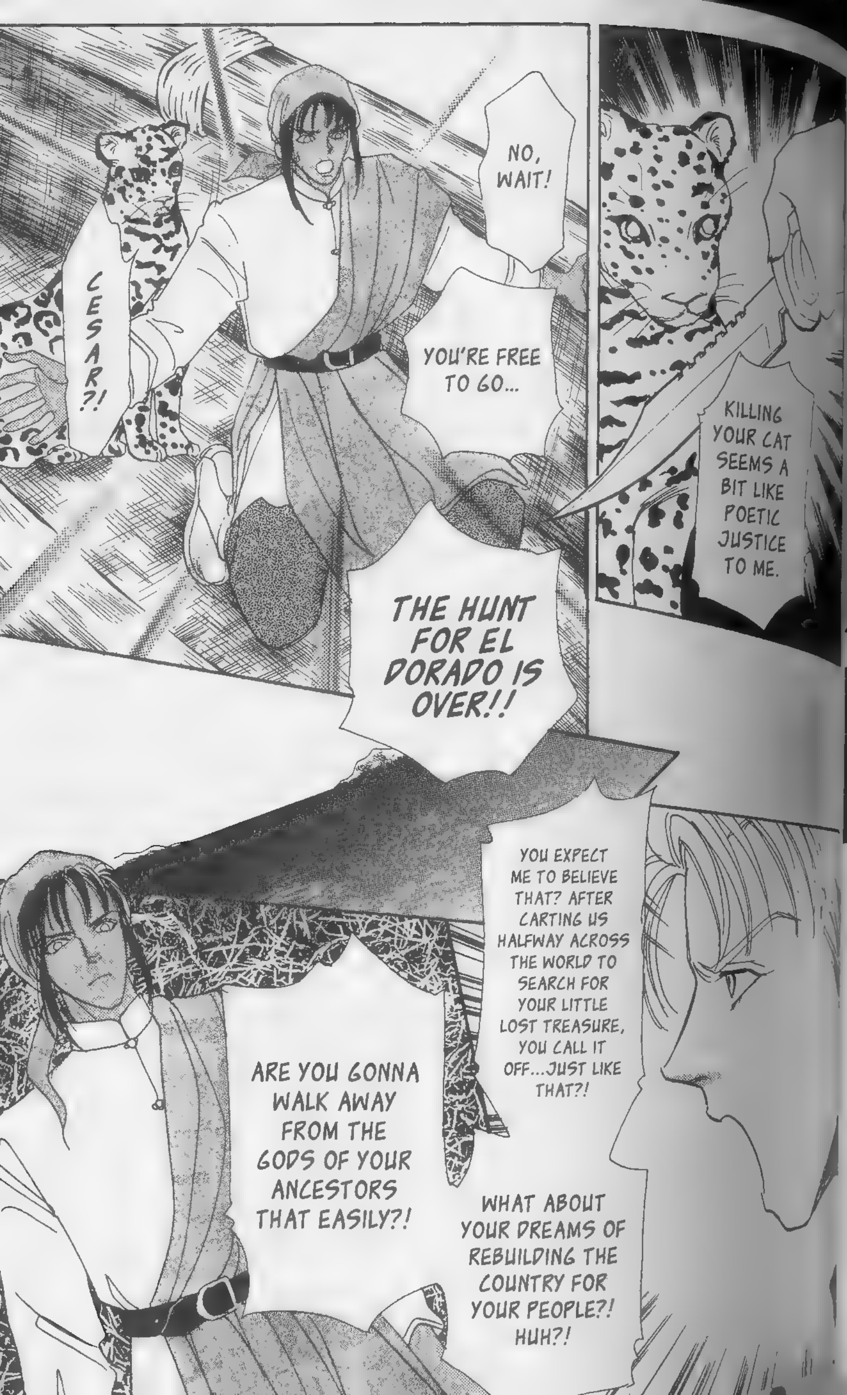

THE SPLENDOR OF THE SUNKEN EL DORADO...
...WILL ONLY REVEAL ITSELF WITH THE TOUCH OF THE DEAD GOD.
JAGUARS WERE DEIFIED IN THE ANCIENT INCAN RELIGION
IN EXCHANGE FOR HER HOLY BLOOD...
...EL DORADO WILL AT LAST BE REVEALED.
TH-THIS CAN'T BE! THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!
MY WORDS ARE TINA'S WORDS.
YOU HAVE NOT QUESTIONED THEM BEFORE. WHY START NOW?
B-BUT...
CESAR...

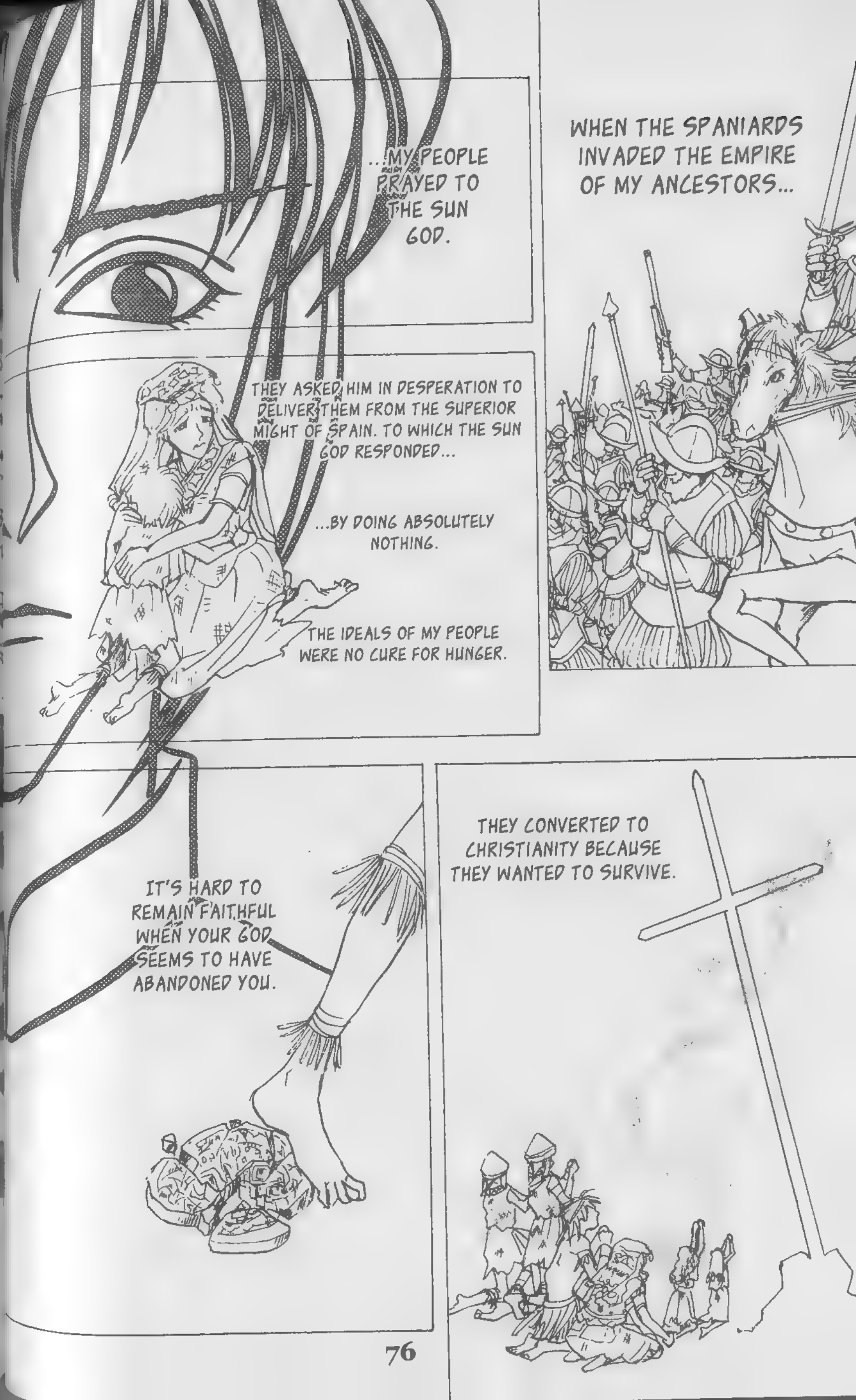

NOW, THEN...
WHAT?!
You were serious?!
I'm really getting sacrificed?!
CESAR, WILL YOU DO THE HONORS?
KINDLY CUT OFF TINA'S HEAD WITH THIS KNIFE, PLEASE.
WHAT?!!

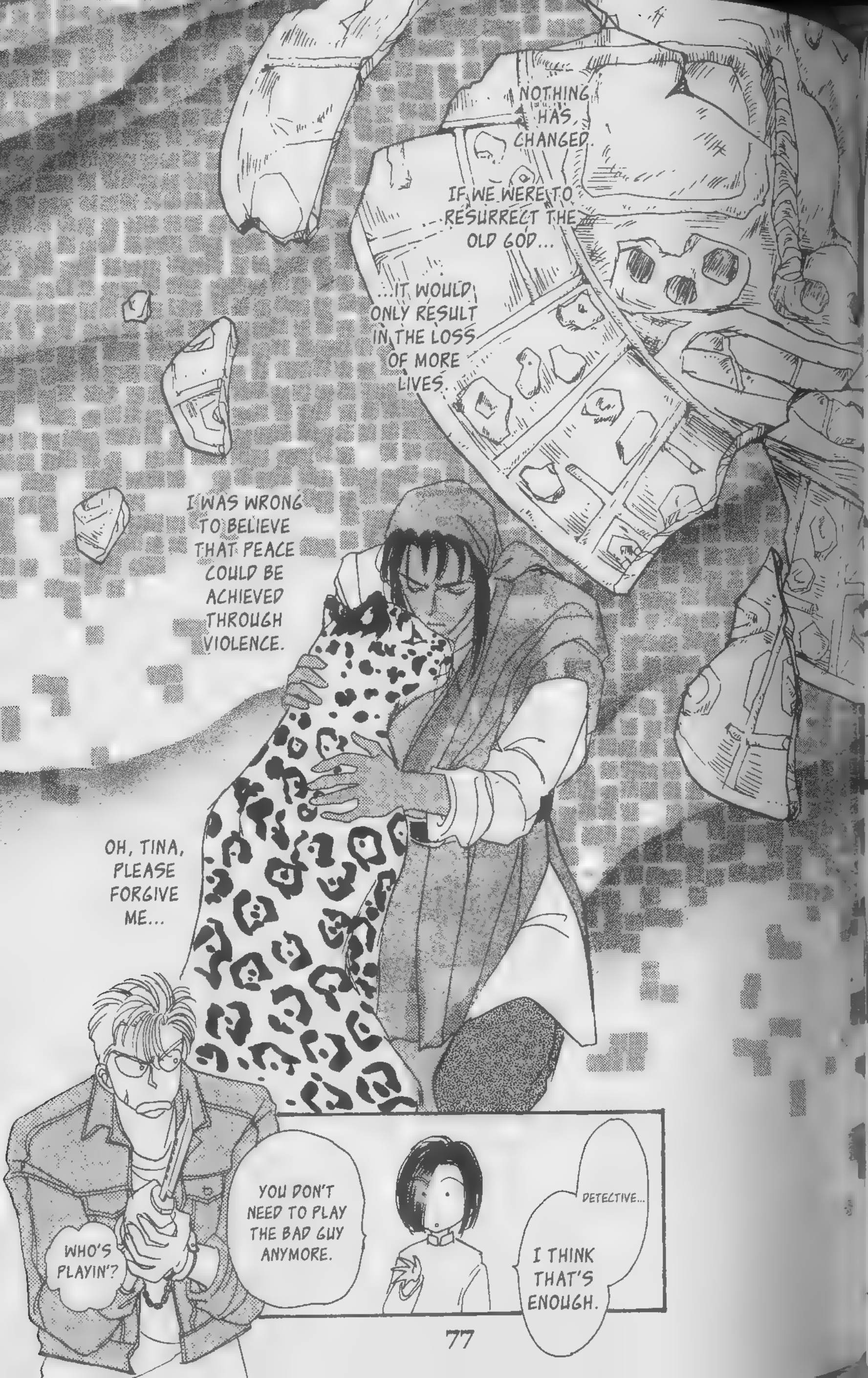

THE COUNT SPEAKS THE TRUTH.
WE GUARDIAN BEASTS SERVE THE EMPEROR WITH OUR LIVES.
IT IS MY DUTY TO DIE FOR THE GOOD OF THE EMPIRE.
TINA?!
ALL MY LIFE, YOU HAVE BEEN THERE. WE WERE INSEPARABLE AS CHILDREN.

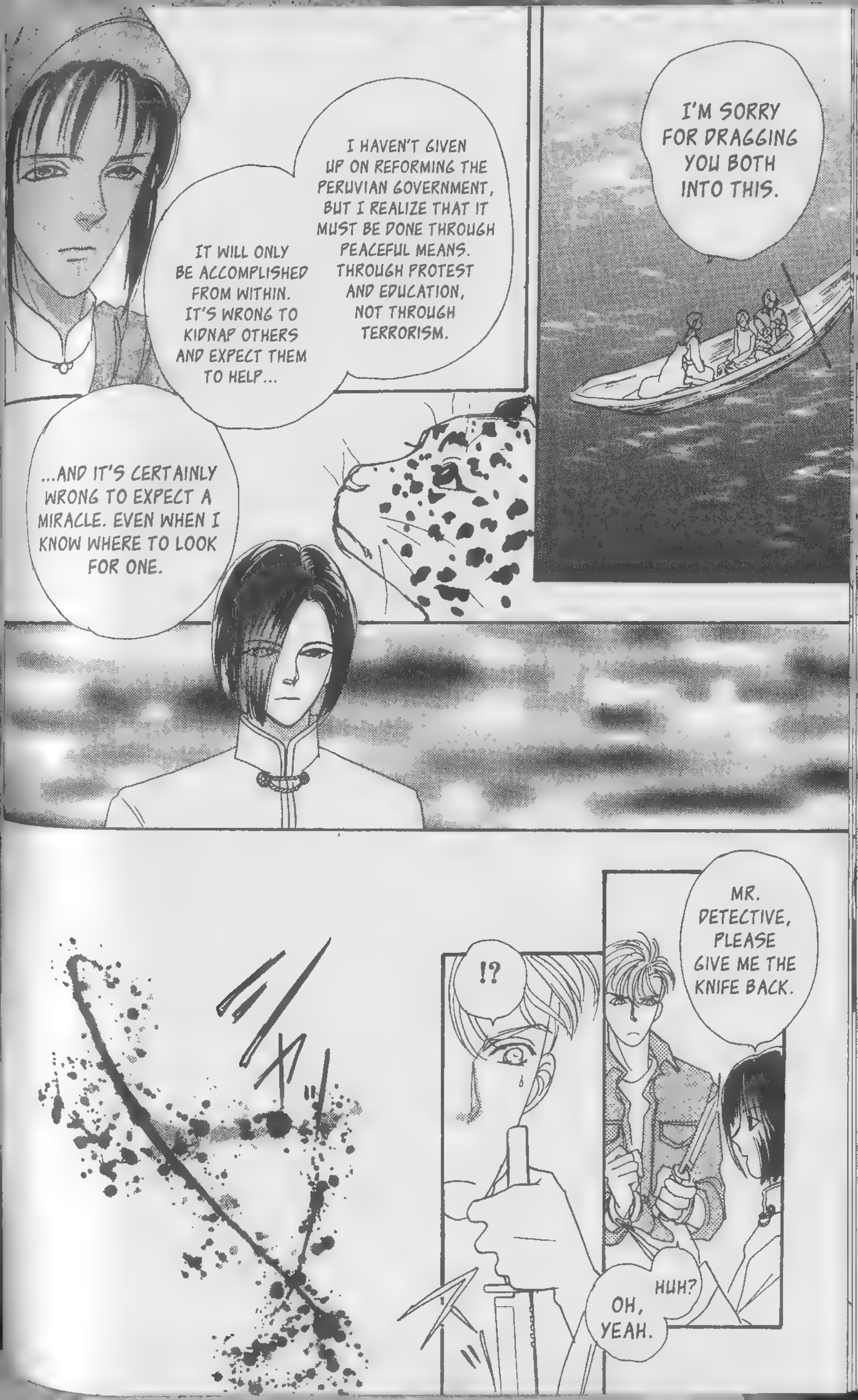

I ALWAYS KNEW...
...THAT SOMEDAY I'D BE ABLE TO SPEAK WITH YOU. TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH I'VE ENJOYED SERVING YOU.
THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!!
CESAR?!
JAGUARS CAN'T SPEAK!!
IT'S A LIE! ALL OF IT! EVERY WORD!
I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF IT! IT'S JUST A TRICK TO PREVENT ME FROM OBTAINING EL DORADO!

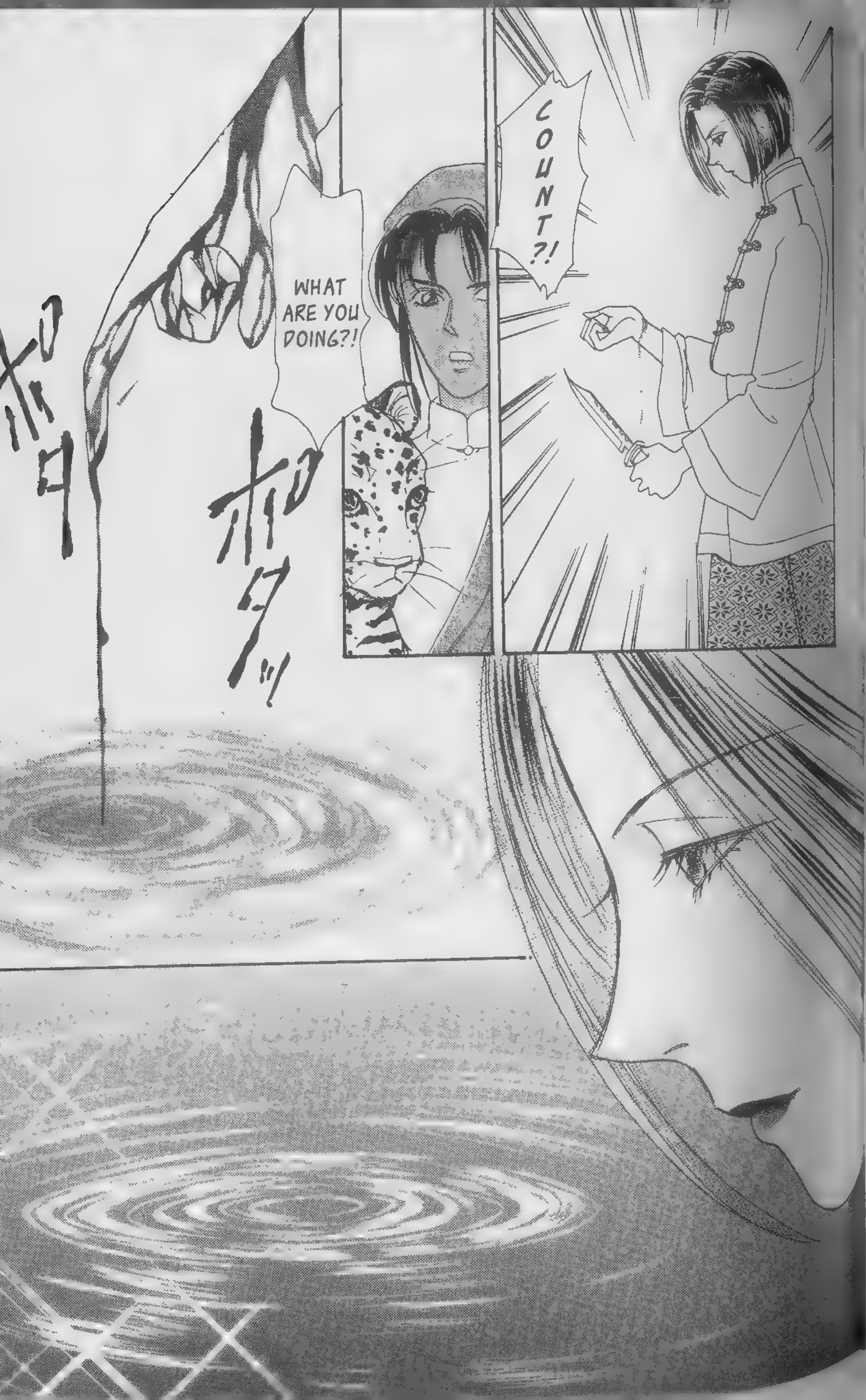

NO CHOICE THEN... IT'S YOUR TURN NOW, DETECTIVE.
I'll be damned if I'm going under that knife!
HERE.
!?
HAVE YOU EVER SLAUGHTERED AN ANIMAL BEFORE, DETECTIVE? IT'S BEST TO DO IT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
WHAT?!
!!
......
HEH....
YOU HAVE NO INTENTION OF LETTING US GO, DO YOU CESAR?
EVEN IF YOU GOT THE RANSOM YOU'D NEVER LET US GO ALIVE. NOT AFTER ALL WE'VE SEEN.


KILLING YOUR CAT SEEMS A BIT LIKE POETIC JUSTICE TO ME.
NO, WAIT!
CESAR?!
YOU'RE FREE TO GO...
THE HUNT FOR EL DORADO IS OVER!!
YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT? AFTER CARTING US HALFWAY ACROSS THE WORLD TO SEARCH FOR YOUR LITTLE LOST TREASURE, YOU CALL IT OFF...JUST LIKE THAT?!
ARE YOU GONNA WALK AWAY FROM THE GODS OF YOUR ANCESTORS THAT EASILY?!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR DREAMS OF REBUILDING THE COUNTRY FOR YOUR PEOPLE?! HUH?!


WHEN THE SPANIARDS INVADED THE EMPIRE OF MY ANCESTORS...
...MY PEOPLE PRAYED TO THE SUN GOD.
THEY ASKED HIM IN DESPERATION TO DELIVER THEM FROM THE SUPERIOR MIGHT OF SPAIN. TO WHICH THE SUN GOD RESPONDED...
...BY DOING ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.
THE IDEALS OF MY PEOPLE WERE NO CURE FOR HUNGER.
THEY CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO SURVIVE.
IT'S HARD TO REMAIN FAITHFUL WHEN YOUR GOD SEEMS TO HAVE ABANDONED YOU.


NOTHING HAS CHANGED.
IF WE WERE TO RESURRECT THE OLD GOD...
...IT WOULD ONLY RESULT IN THE LOSS OF MORE LIVES.
I WAS WRONG TO BELIEVE THAT PEACE COULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH VIOLENCE.
OH, TINA, PLEASE FORGIVE ME...
DETECTIVE...
I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH.
YOU DON'T NEED TO PLAY THE BAD GUY ANYMORE.
WHO'S PLAYIN'?


I'M SORRY FOR DRAGGING YOU BOTH INTO THIS.
I HAVEN'T GIVEN UP ON REFORMING THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT, BUT I REALIZE THAT IT MUST BE DONE THROUGH PEACEFUL MEANS. THROUGH PROTEST AND EDUCATION, NOT THROUGH TERRORISM.
IT WILL ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED FROM WITHIN. IT'S WRONG TO KIDNAP OTHERS AND EXPECT THEM TO HELP...
...AND IT'S CERTAINLY WRONG TO EXPECT A MIRACLE. EVEN WHEN I KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FOR ONE.
MR. DETECTIVE, PLEASE GIVE ME THE KNIFE BACK.
!?
HUH?
OH, YEAH.


COUNT?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
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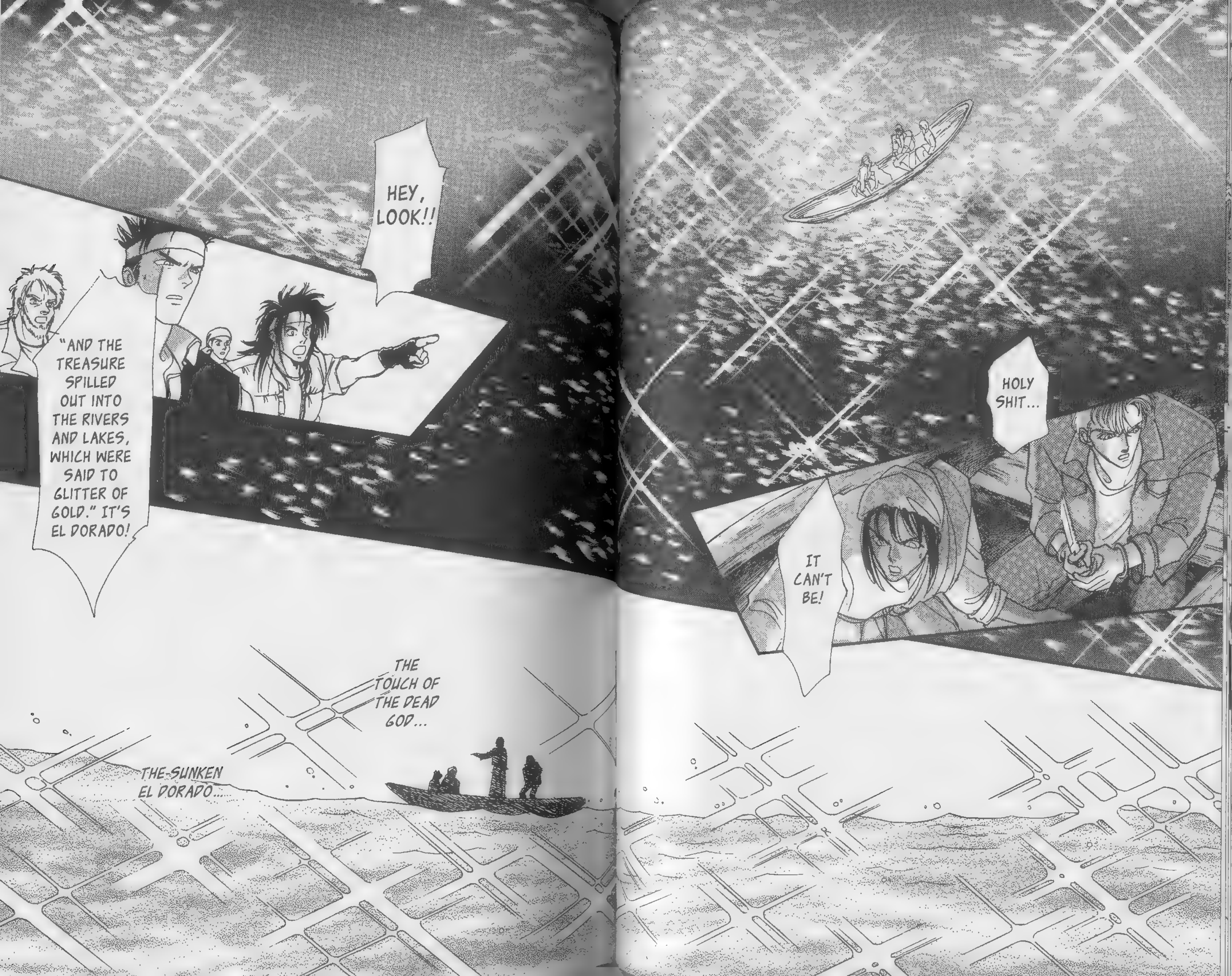
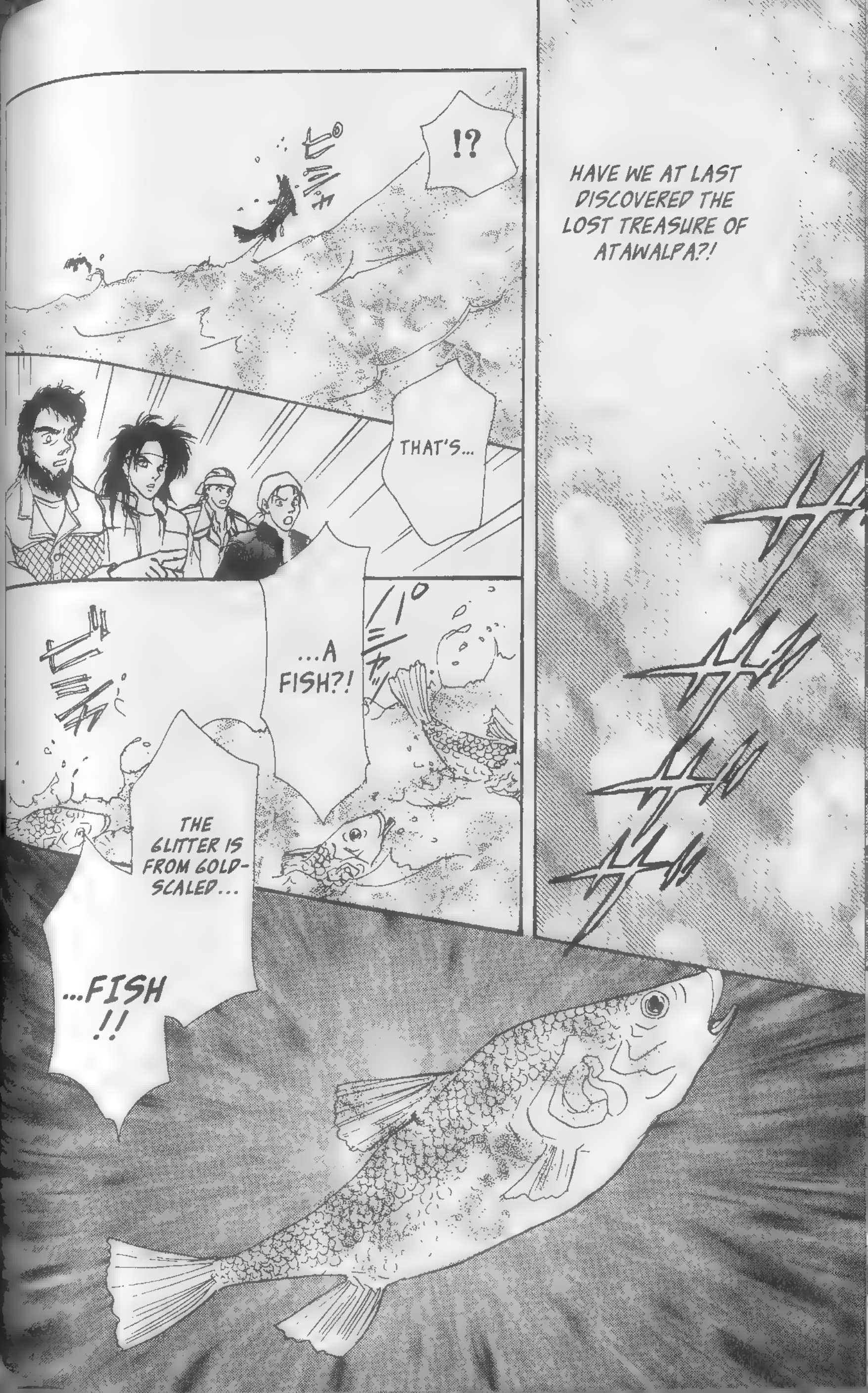
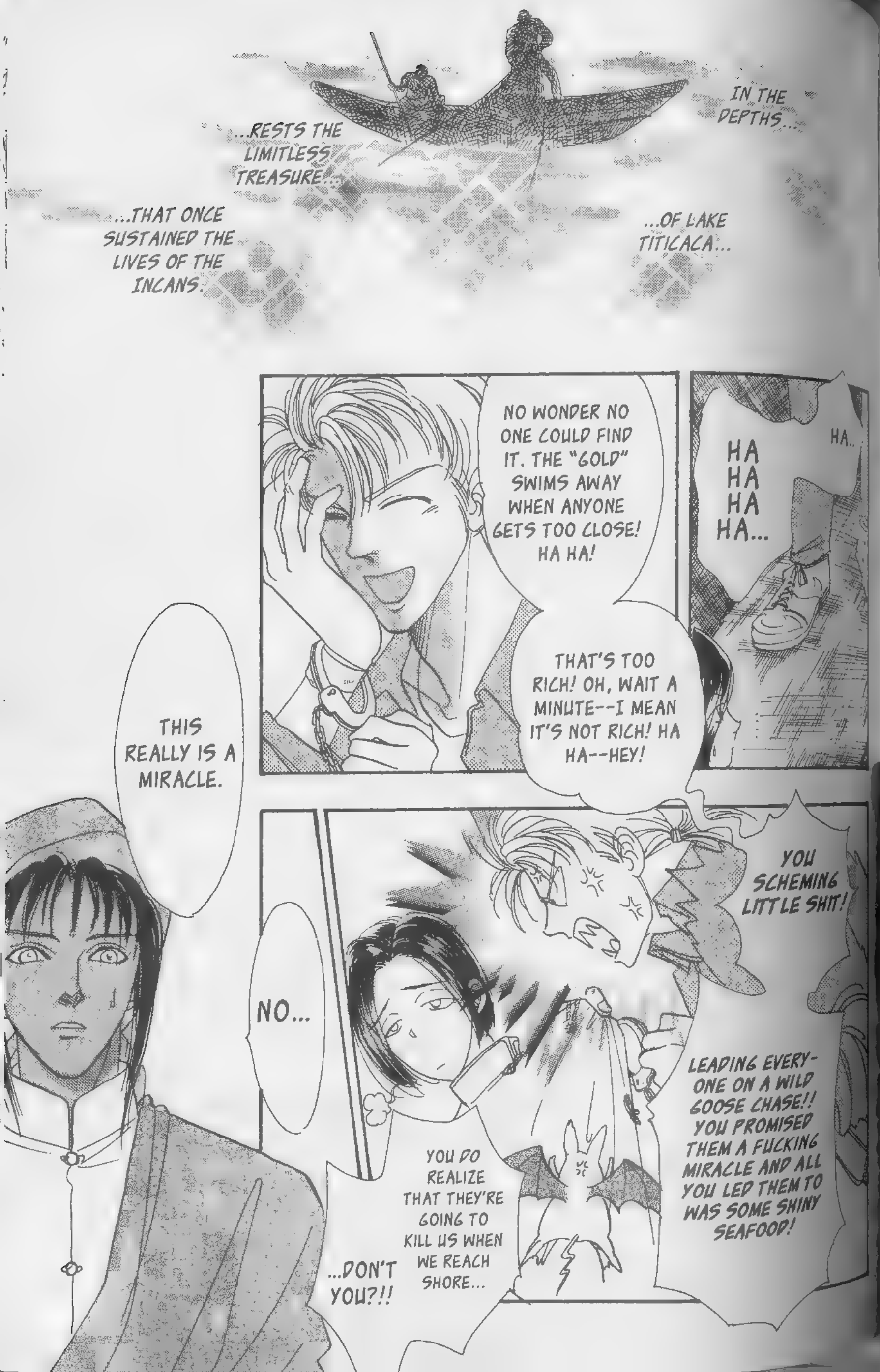
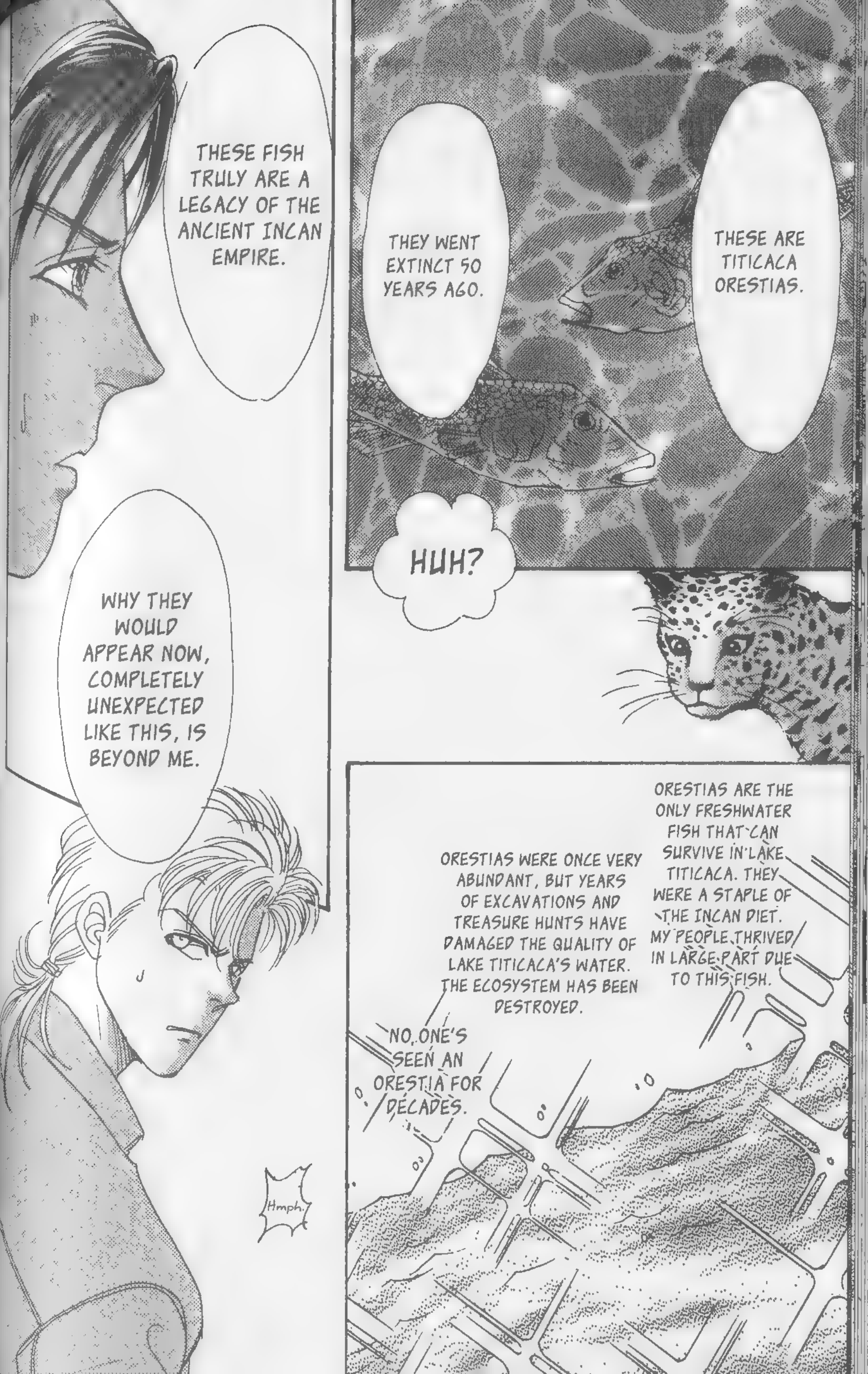
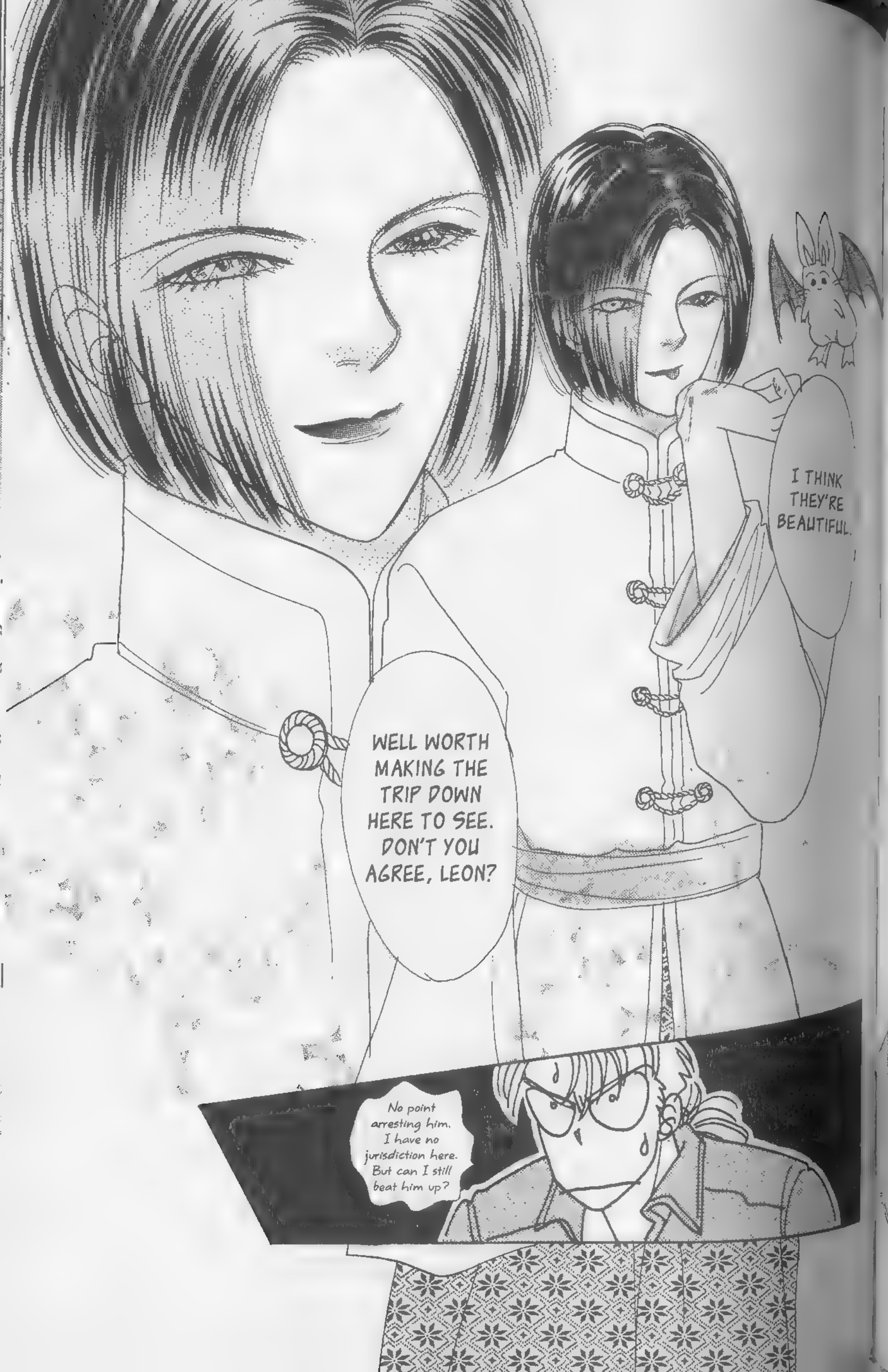
ポタッ

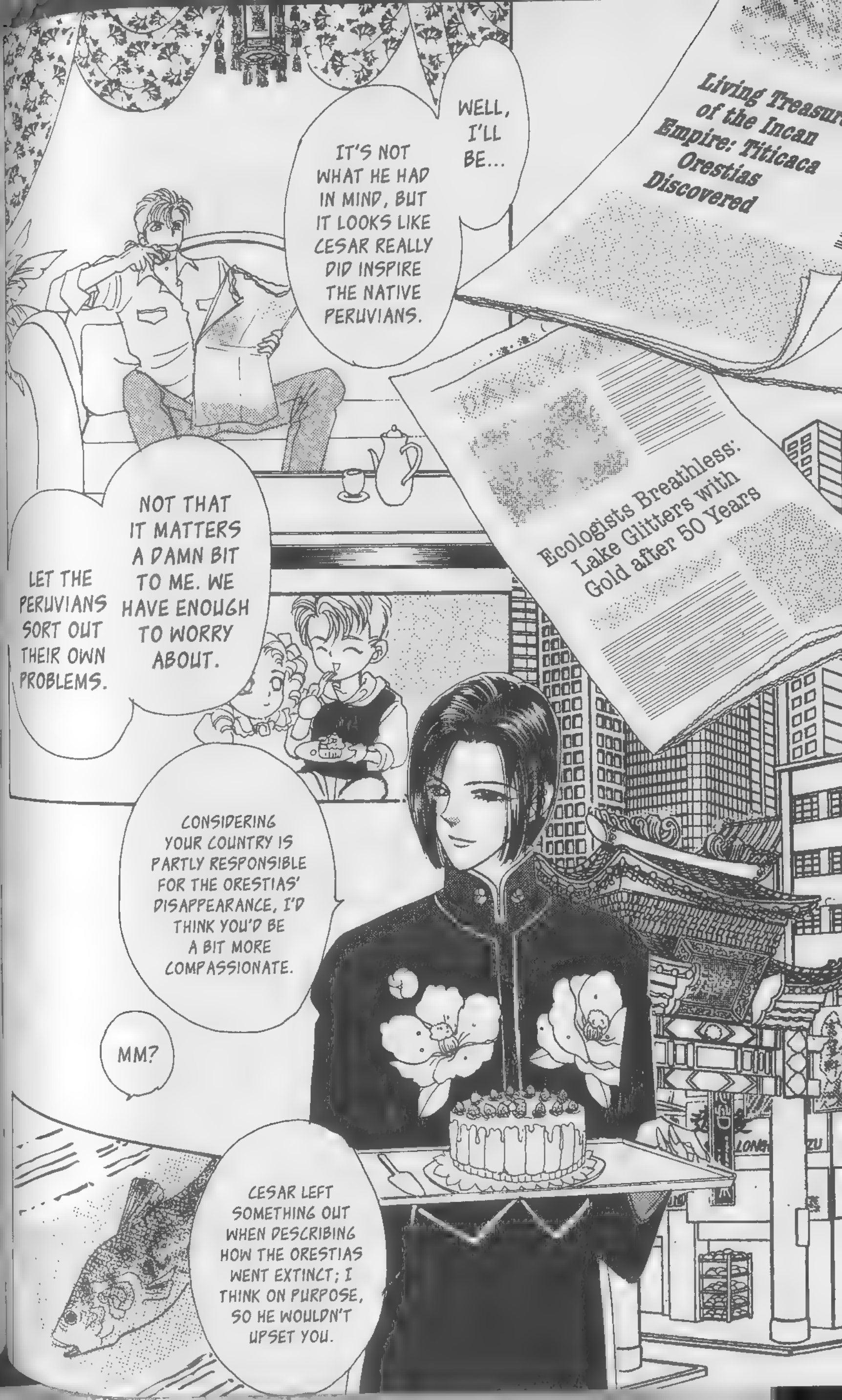

HOLY SHIT...
IT CAN'T BE!
HEY, LOOK!!
"AND THE TREASURE SPILLED OUT INTO THE RIVERS AND LAKES, WHICH WERE SAID TO GLITTER OF GOLD." IT'S EL DORADO!
THE TOUCH OF THE DEAD GOD...
THE SUNKEN EL DORADO...

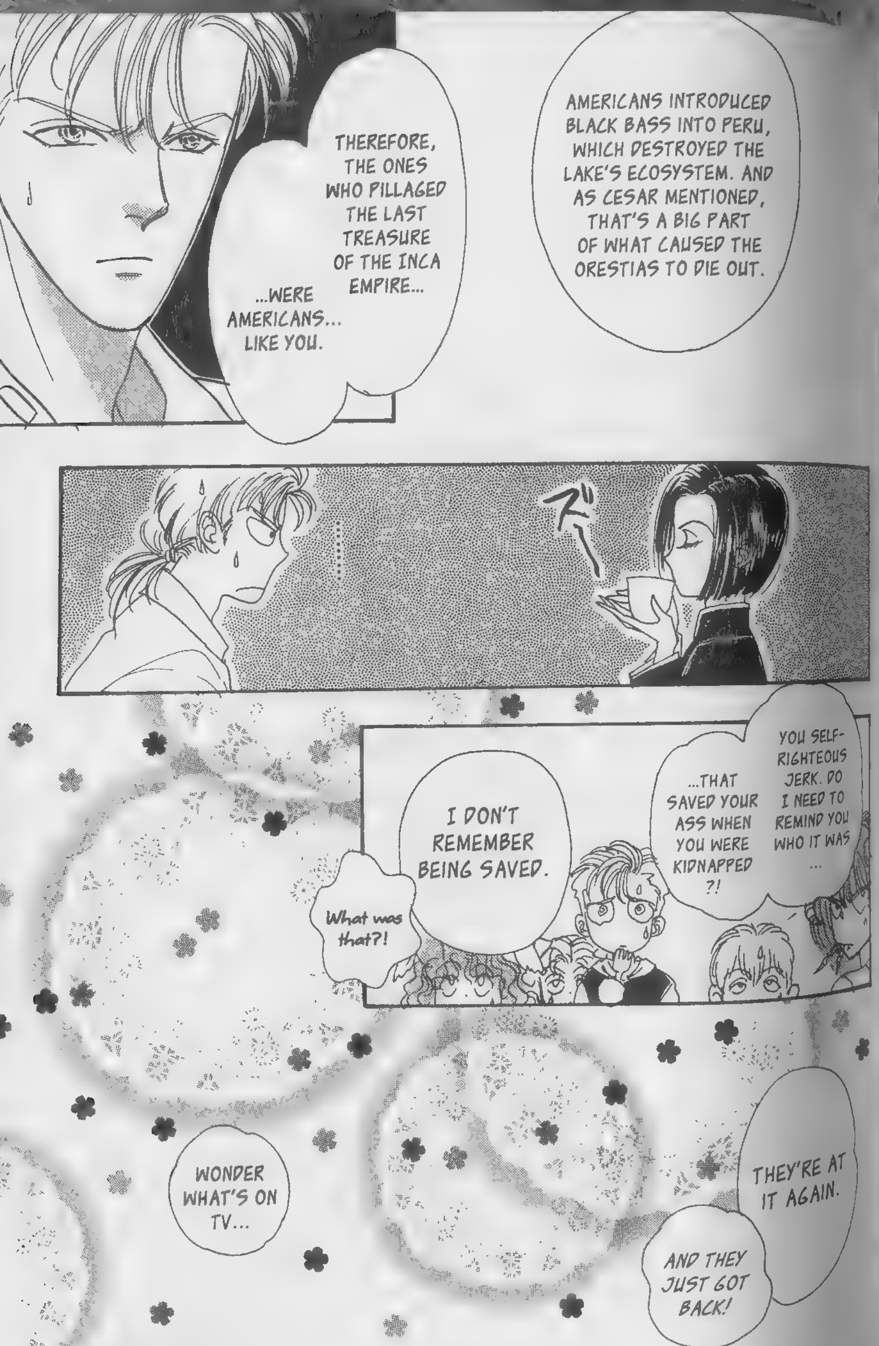

HAVE WE AT LAST DISCOVERED THE LOST TREASURE OF ATAWALPA?!
!?
THAT'S...
...A FISH?!
THE GLITTER IS FROM GOLD-SCALED...
...FISH !!


IN THE DEPTHS...
...OF LAKE TITICACA...
...RESTS THE LIMITLESS TREASURE...
...THAT ONCE SUSTAINED THE LIVES OF THE INCANS.
NO WONDER NO ONE COULD FIND IT. THE "GOLD" SWIMS AWAY WHEN ANYONE GETS TOO CLOSE! HA HA!
HA..
HA HA HA HA...
THAT'S TOO RICH! OH, WAIT A MINUTE--I MEAN IT'S NOT RICH! HA HA--HEY!
THIS REALLY IS A MIRACLE.
YOU SCHEMING LITTLE SHIT!
LEADING EVERYONE ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE!! YOU PROMISED THEM A FUCKING MIRACLE AND ALL YOU LED THEM TO WAS SOME SHINY SEAFOOD!
YOU DO REALIZE THAT THEY'RE GOING TO KILL US WHEN WE REACH SHORE...
NO...
...DON'T YOU?!!


THESE ARE TITICACA ORESTIAS.
THEY WENT EXTINCT 50 YEARS AGO.
HUH?
ORESTIAS ARE THE ONLY FRESHWATER FISH THAT CAN SURVIVE IN LAKE TITICACA. THEY WERE A STAPLE OF THE INCAN DIET. MY PEOPLE THRIVED IN LARGE PART DUE TO THIS FISH.
ORESTIAS WERE ONCE VERY ABUNDANT, BUT YEARS OF EXCAVATIONS AND TREASURE HUNTS HAVE DAMAGED THE QUALITY OF LAKE TITICACA'S WATER. THE ECOSYSTEM HAS BEEN DESTROYED.
NO ONE'S SEEN AN ORESTIA FOR DECADES.
THESE FISH TRULY ARE A LEGACY OF THE ANCIENT INCAN EMPIRE.
WHY THEY WOULD APPEAR NOW, COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED LIKE THIS, IS BEYOND ME.
Hmph.


I THINK THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL.
WELL WORTH MAKING THE TRIP DOWN HERE TO SEE. DON'T YOU AGREE, LEON?
No point arresting him. I have no jurisdiction here. But can I still beat him up?


Living Treasure of the Incan Empire: Titicaca Orestias Discovered
WELL, I'LL BE...
IT'S NOT WHAT HE HAD IN MIND, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE CESAR REALLY DID INSPIRE THE NATIVE PERUVIANS.
Ecologists Breathless: Lake Glitters with Gold after 50 Years
NOT THAT IT MATTERS A DAMN BIT TO ME. WE HAVE ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT.
LET THE PERUVIANS SORT OUT THEIR OWN PROBLEMS.
CONSIDERING YOUR COUNTRY IS PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ORESTIAS' DISAPPEARANCE, I'D THINK YOU'D BE A BIT MORE COMPASSIONATE.
MM?
CESAR LEFT SOMETHING OUT WHEN DESCRIBING HOW THE ORESTIAS WENT EXTINCT; I THINK ON PURPOSE, SO HE WOULDN'T UPSET YOU.

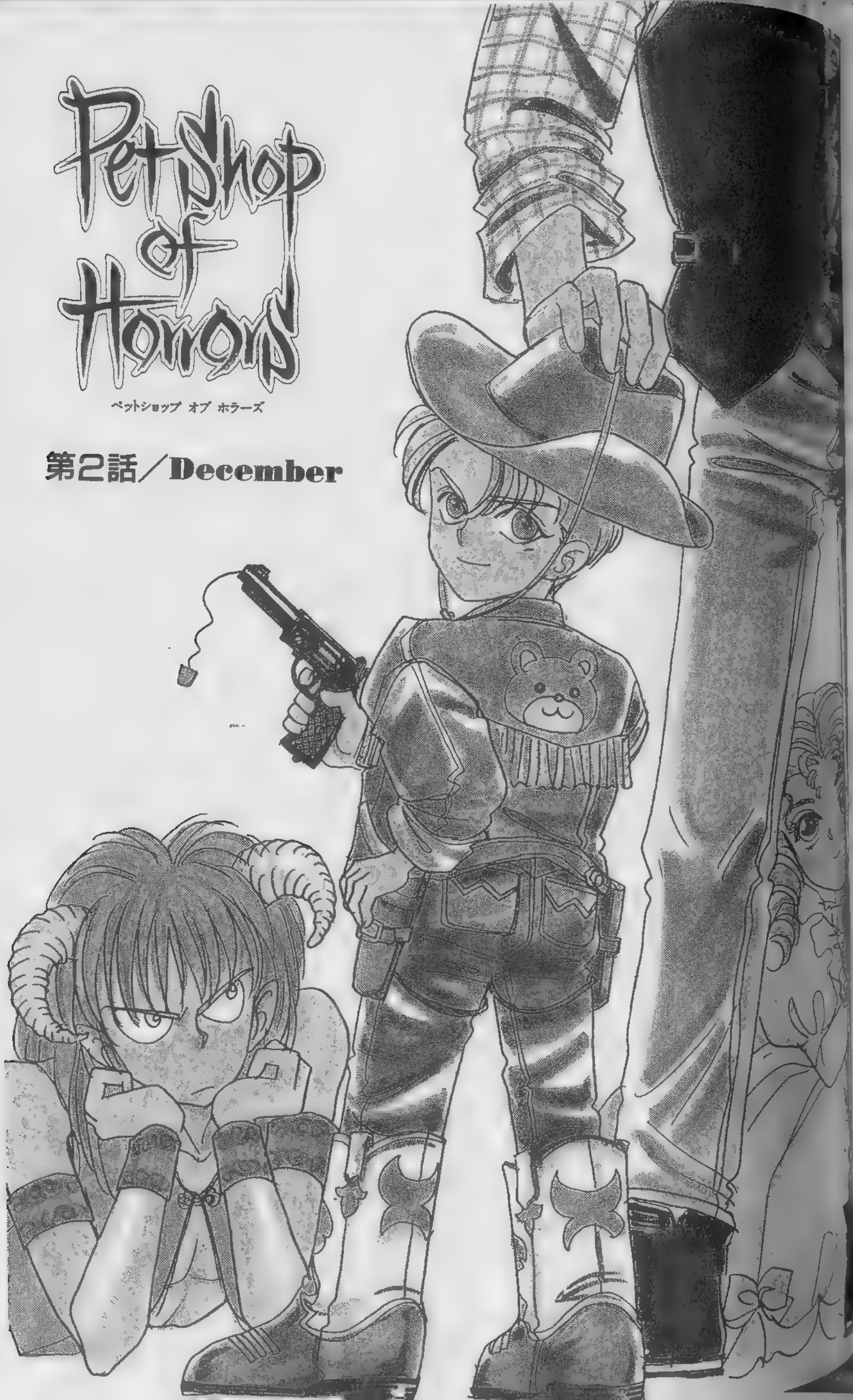

AMERICANS INTRODUCED BLACK BASS INTO PERU, WHICH DESTROYED THE LAKE'S ECOSYSTEM. AND AS CESAR MENTIONED, THAT'S A BIG PART OF WHAT CAUSED THE ORESTIAS TO DIE OUT.
THEREFORE, THE ONES WHO PILLAGED THE LAST TREASURE OF THE INCA EMPIRE...
...WERE AMERICANS... LIKE YOU.
ズー
YOU SELF-RIGHTEOUS JERK. DO I NEED TO REMIND YOU WHO IT WAS...
...THAT SAVED YOUR ASS WHEN YOU WERE KIDNAPPED?!
I DON'T REMEMBER BEING SAVED.
What was that?!
THEY'RE AT IT AGAIN.
AND THEY JUST GOT BACK!
WONDER WHAT'S ON TV...

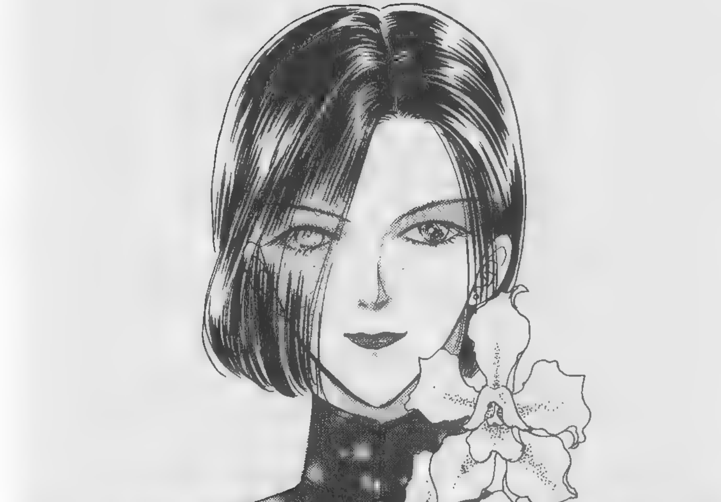
End of Episode 1

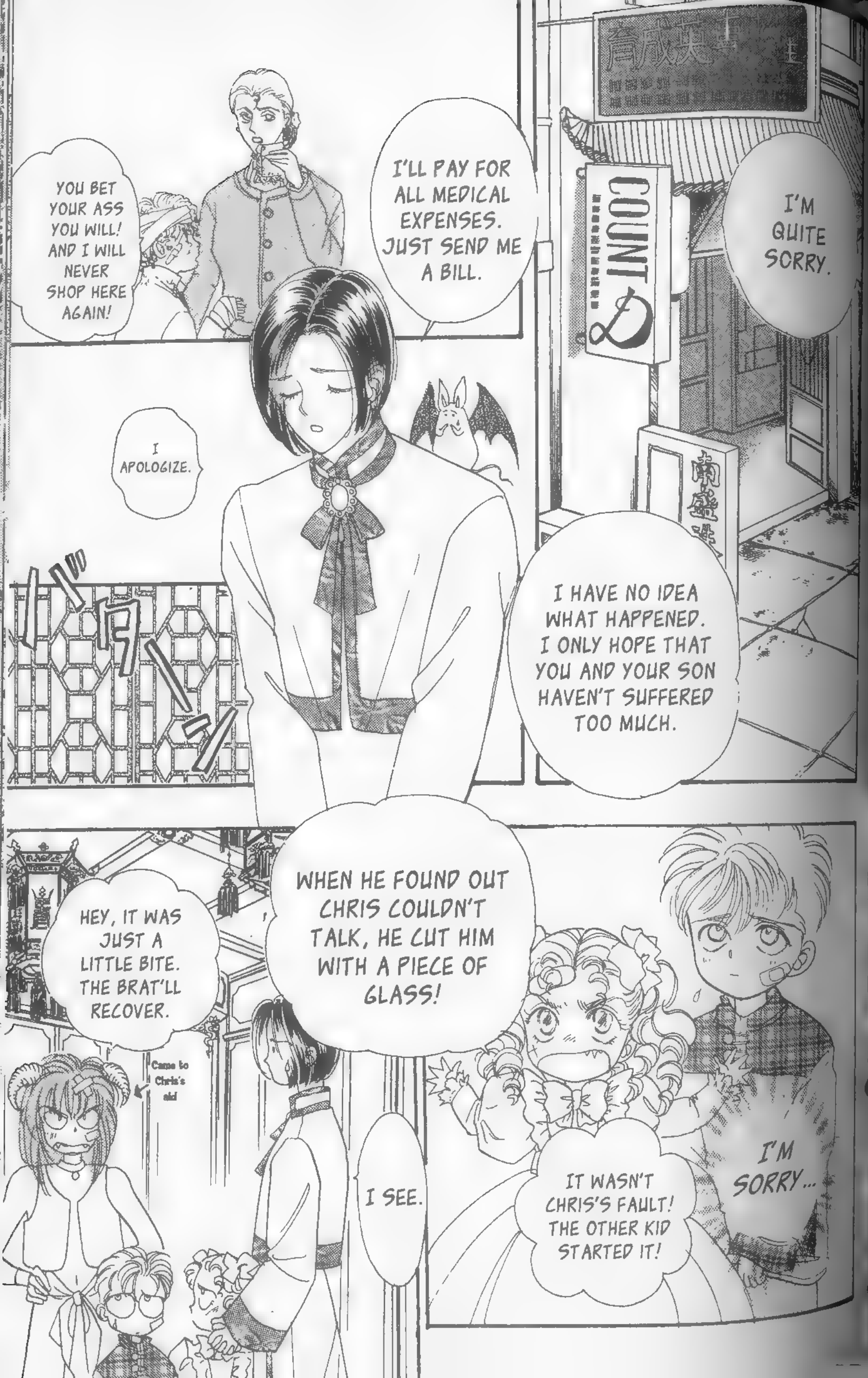
Pet Shop of Horrors

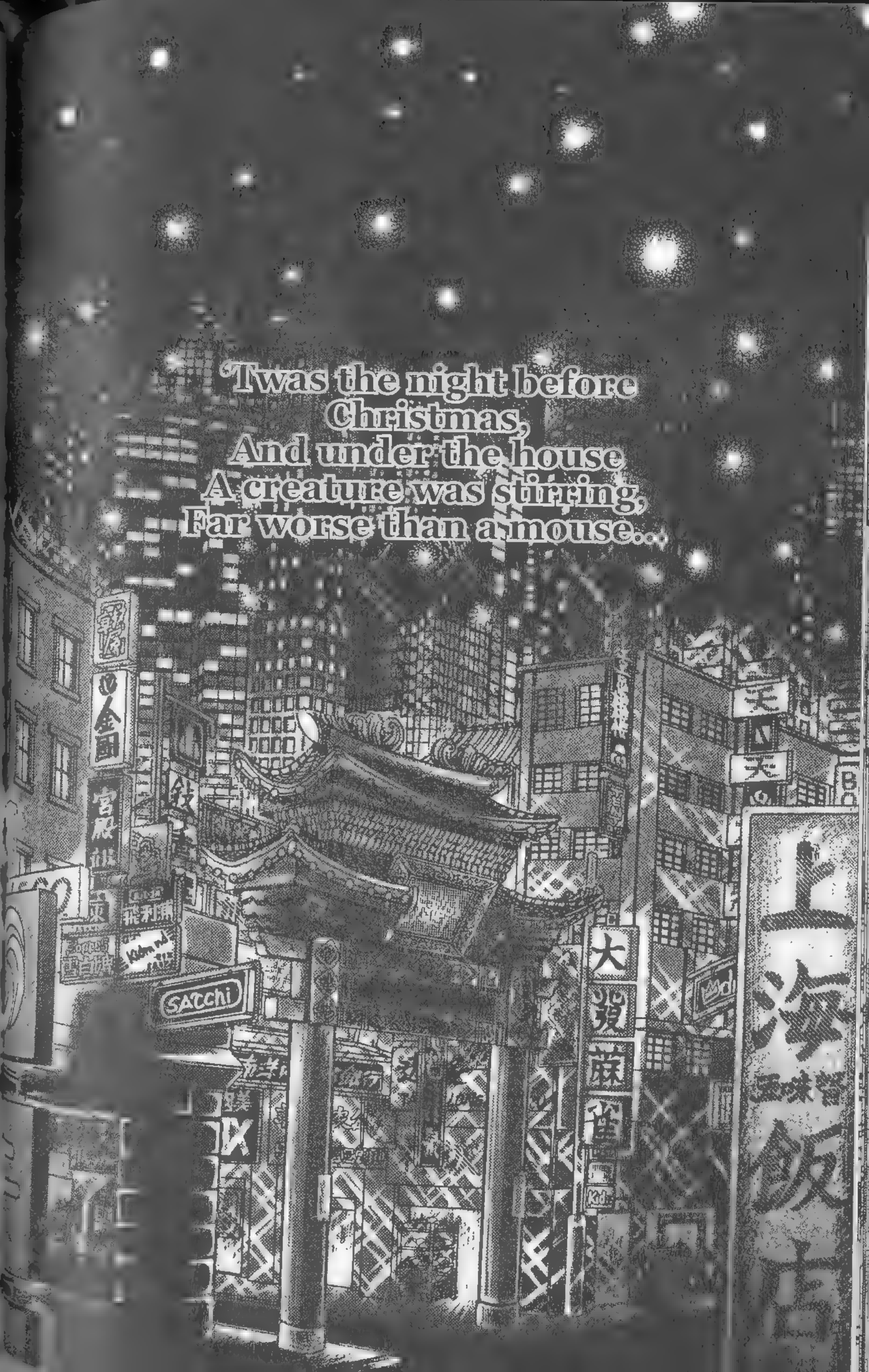
ペットショップ オブ ホラーズ

第2話／December

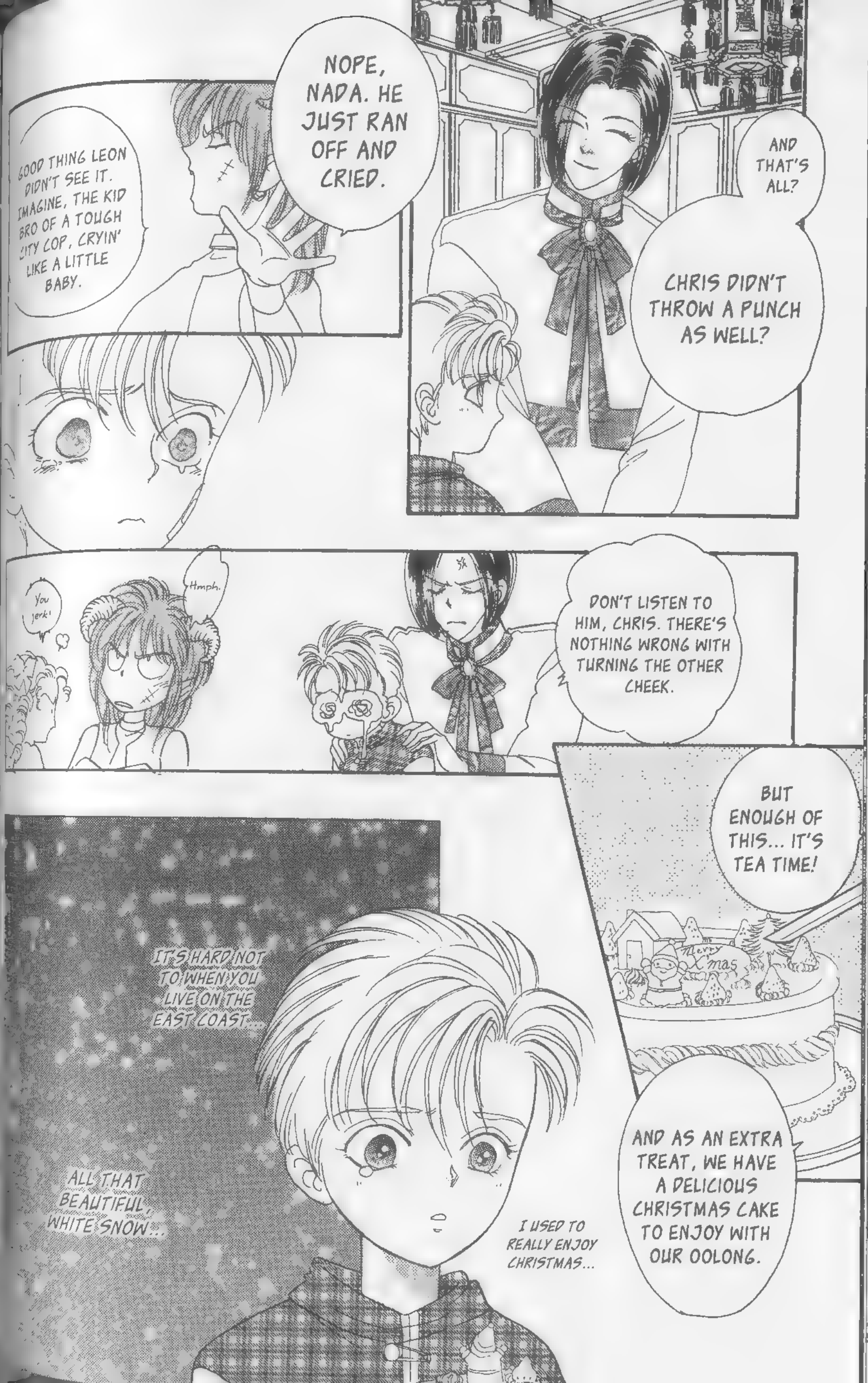


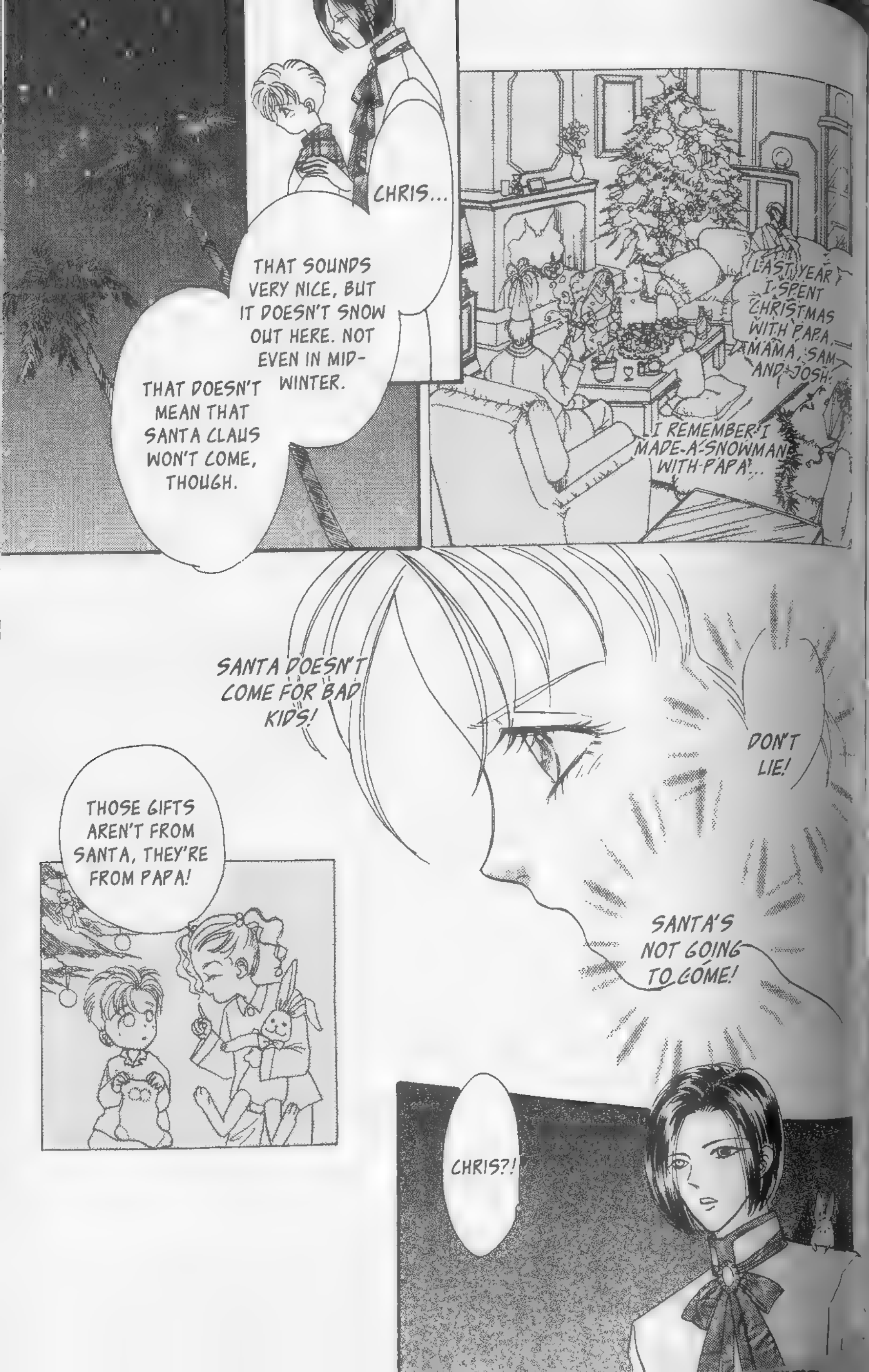


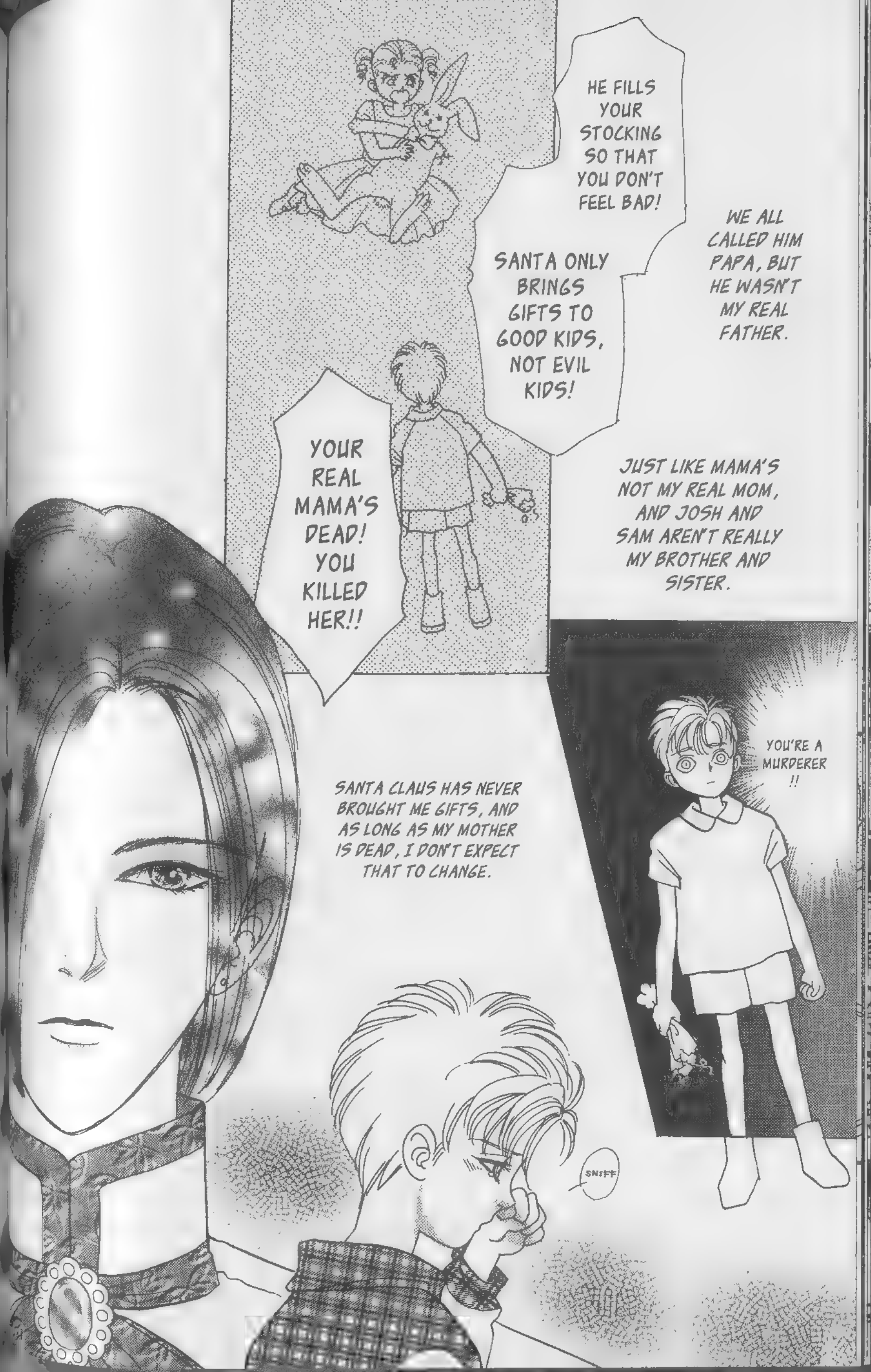

COUNT D
I'M QUITE SORRY.
I'LL PAY FOR ALL MEDICAL EXPENSES. JUST SEND ME A BILL.
YOU BET YOUR ASS YOU WILL! AND I WILL NEVER SHOP HERE AGAIN!
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED. I ONLY HOPE THAT YOU AND YOUR SON HAVEN'T SUFFERED TOO MUCH.
I APOLOGIZE.
I'M SORRY...
IT WASN'T CHRIS'S FAULT! THE OTHER KID STARTED IT!
WHEN HE FOUND OUT CHRIS COULDN'T TALK, HE CUT HIM WITH A PIECE OF GLASS!
HEY, IT WAS JUST A LITTLE BITE. THE BRAT'LL RECOVER.
Came to Chris's aid
I SEE.

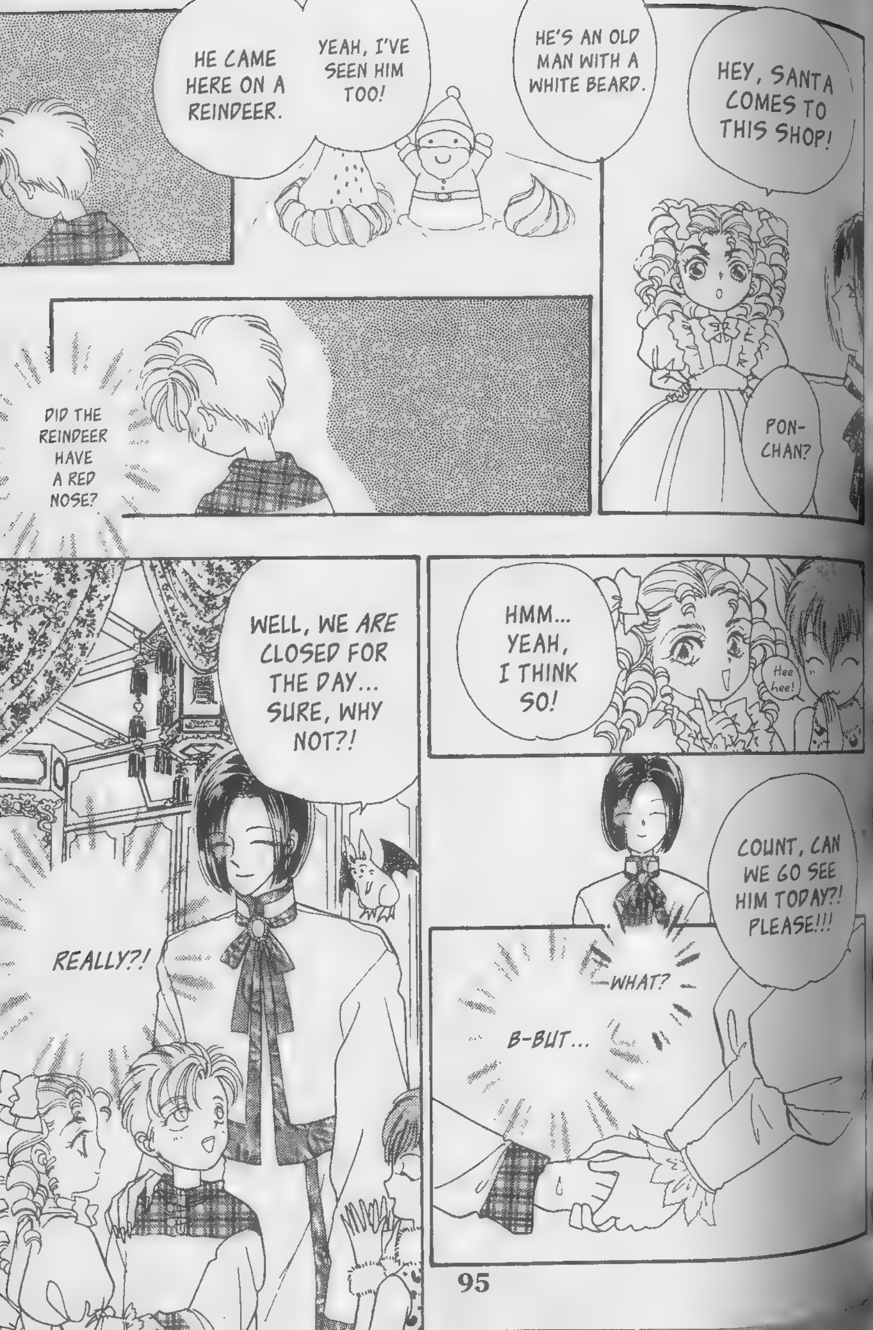


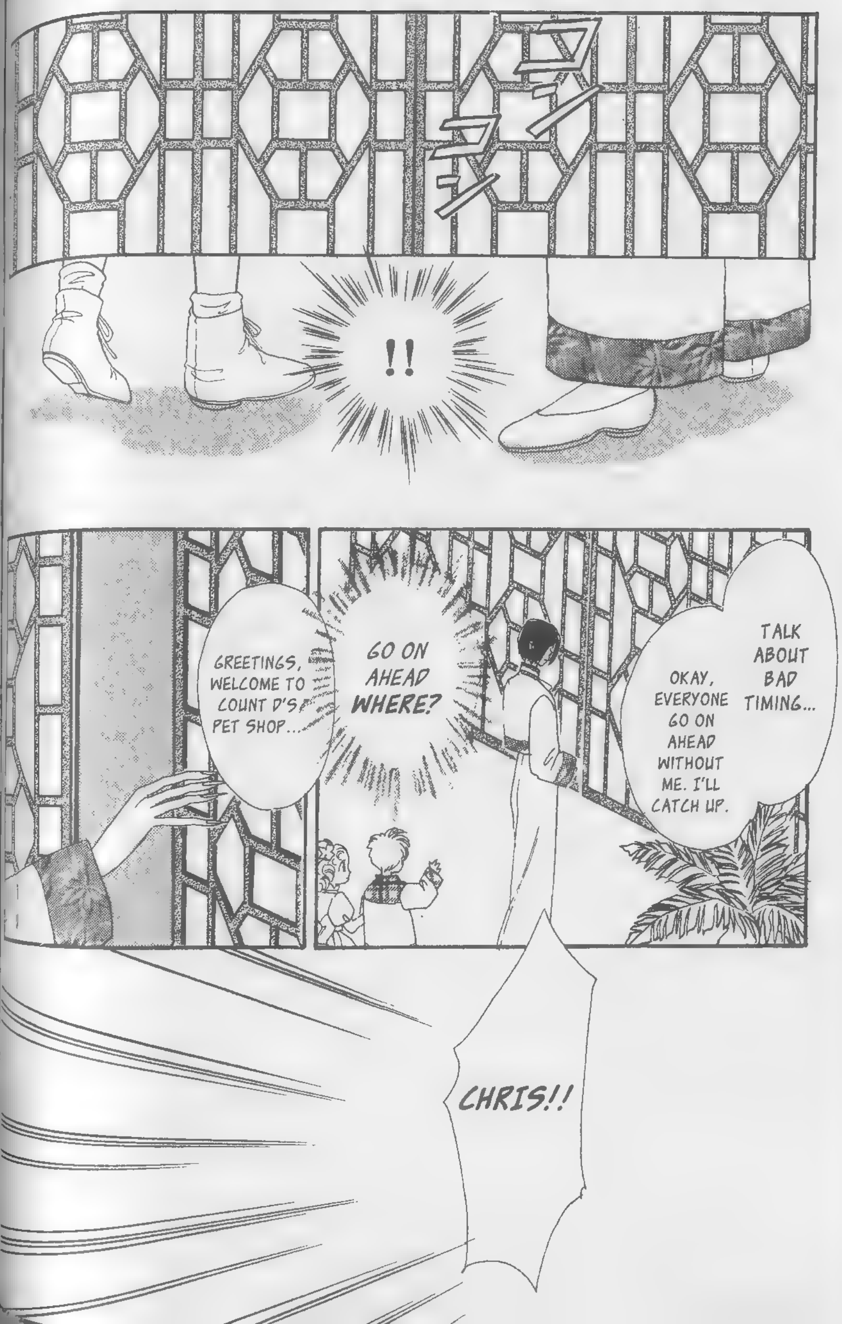
'Twas the night before
Christmas,
And under the house
A creature was stirring,
Far worse than a mouse...

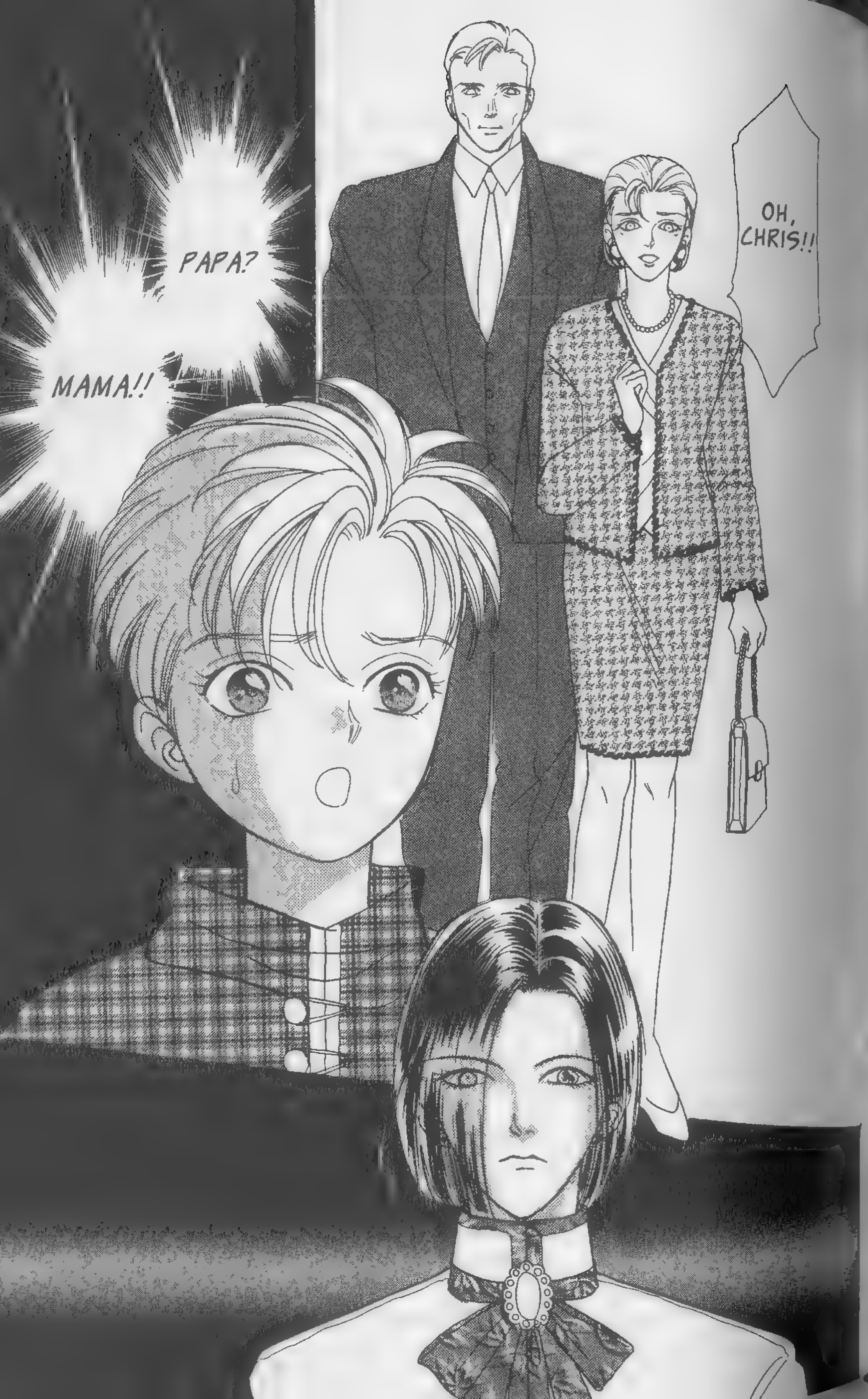

AND THAT'S ALL?
CHRIS DIDN'T THROW A PUNCH AS WELL?
NOPE, NADA. HE JUST RAN OFF AND CRIED.
GOOD THING LEON DIDN'T SEE IT. IMAGINE, THE KID BRO OF A TOUGH CITY COP, CRYIN' LIKE A LITTLE BABY.
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, CHRIS. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK.
Hmph.
You jerk!
BUT ENOUGH OF THIS... IT'S TEA TIME!
AND AS AN EXTRA TREAT, WE HAVE A DELICIOUS CHRISTMAS CAKE TO ENJOY WITH OUR OOLONG.
Merry X'mas
I USED TO REALLY ENJOY CHRISTMAS...
IT'S HARD NOT TO WHEN YOU LIVE ON THE EAST COAST...
ALL THAT BEAUTIFUL WHITE SNOW...

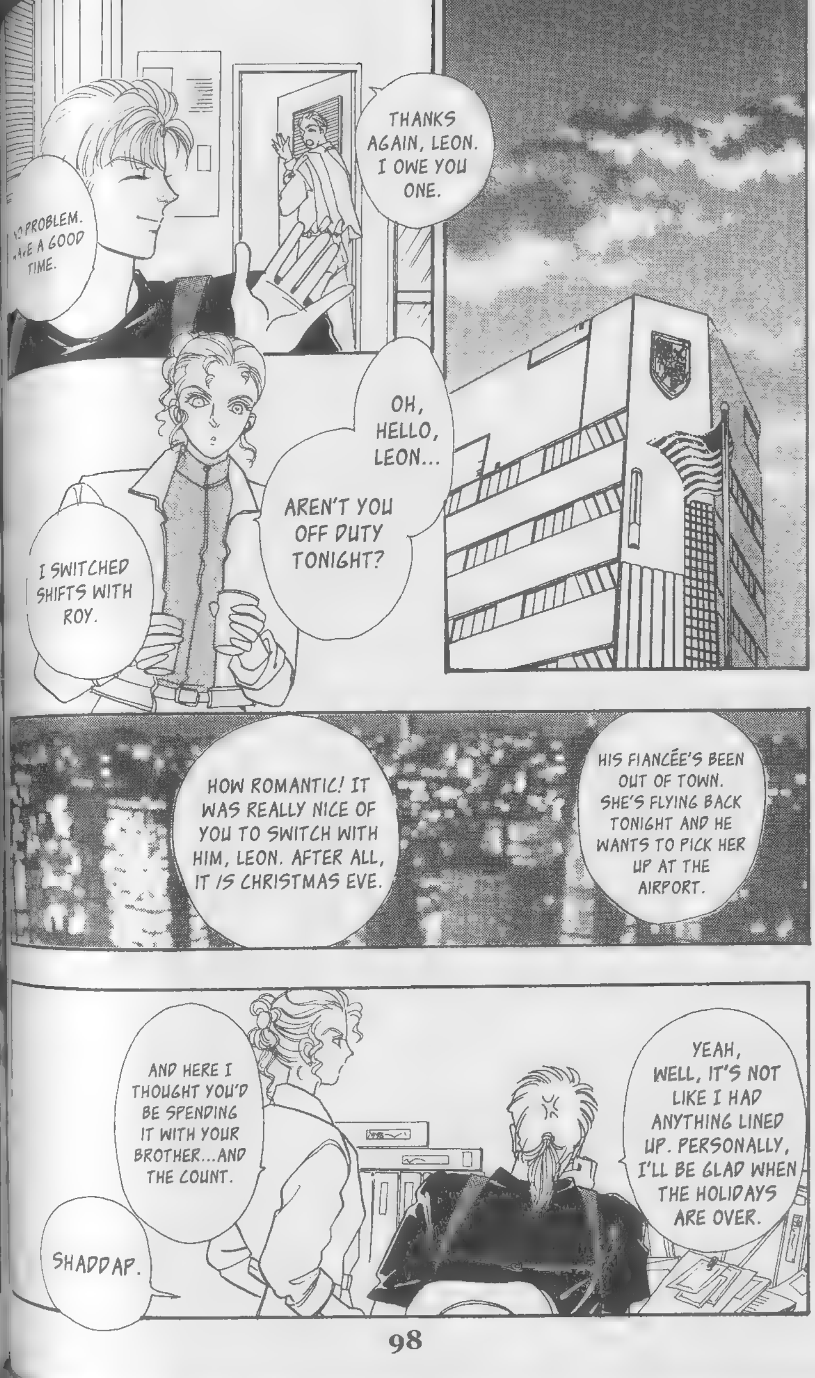

LAST YEAR I SPENT CHRISTMAS WITH PAPA, MAMA, SAM AND JOSH.
I REMEMBER I MADE A SNOWMAN WITH PAPA...
CHRIS...
THAT SOUNDS VERY NICE, BUT IT DOESN'T SNOW OUT HERE. NOT EVEN IN MID-WINTER.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT SANTA CLAUS WON'T COME, THOUGH.
DON'T LIE!
SANTA DOESN'T COME FOR BAD KIDS!
SANTA'S NOT GOING TO COME!
THOSE GIFTS AREN'T FROM SANTA, THEY'RE FROM PAPA!
CHRIS?!

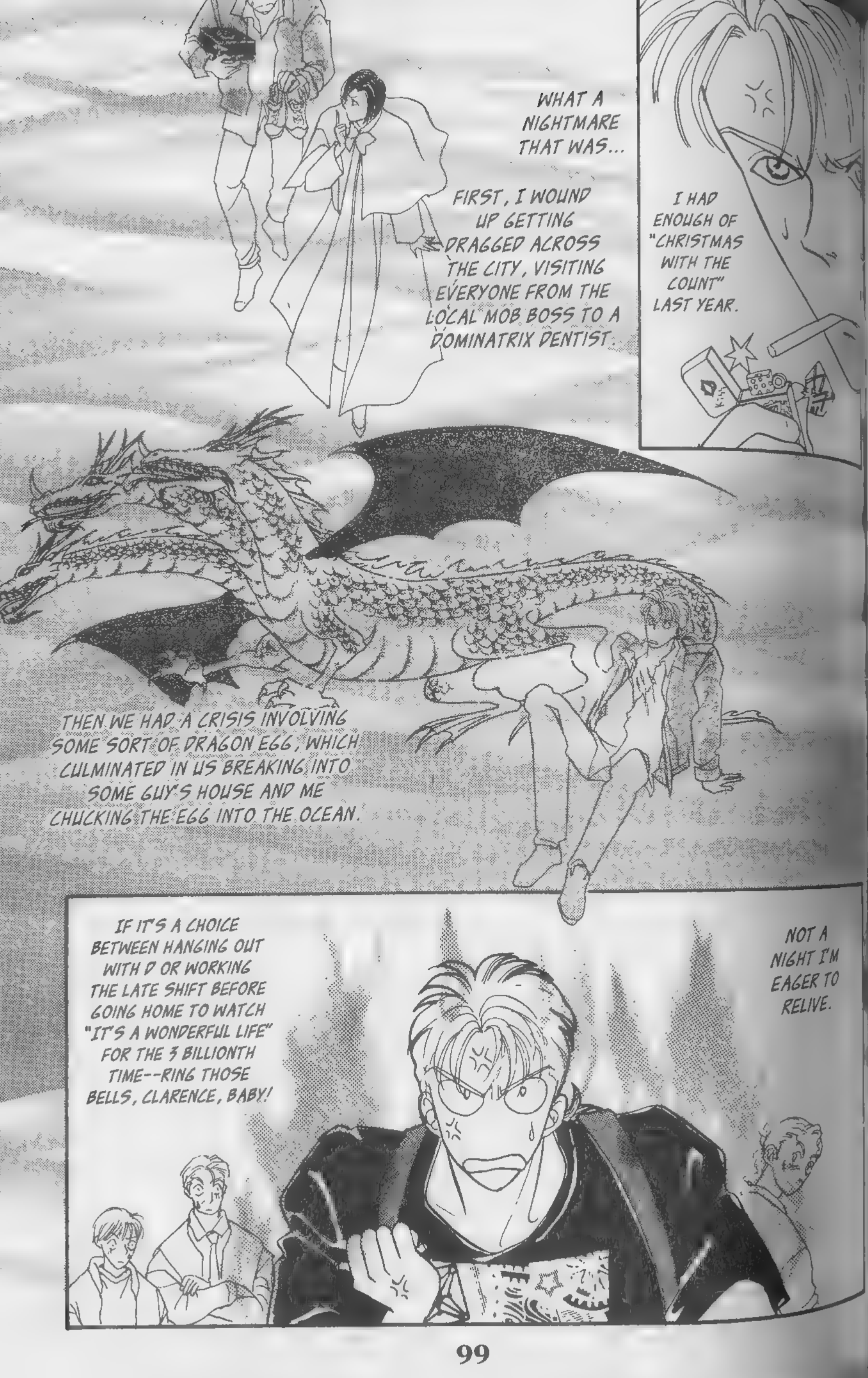

WE ALL CALLED HIM PAPA, BUT HE WASN'T MY REAL FATHER.
JUST LIKE MAMA'S NOT MY REAL MOM, AND JOSH AND SAM AREN'T REALLY MY BROTHER AND SISTER.
HE FILLS YOUR STOCKING SO THAT YOU DON'T FEEL BAD!
SANTA ONLY BRINGS GIFTS TO GOOD KIDS, NOT EVIL KIDS!
YOUR REAL MAMA'S DEAD! YOU KILLED HER!!
YOU'RE A MURDERER!!
SANTA CLAUS HAS NEVER BROUGHT ME GIFTS, AND AS LONG AS MY MOTHER IS DEAD, I DON'T EXPECT THAT TO CHANGE.
SNIFF

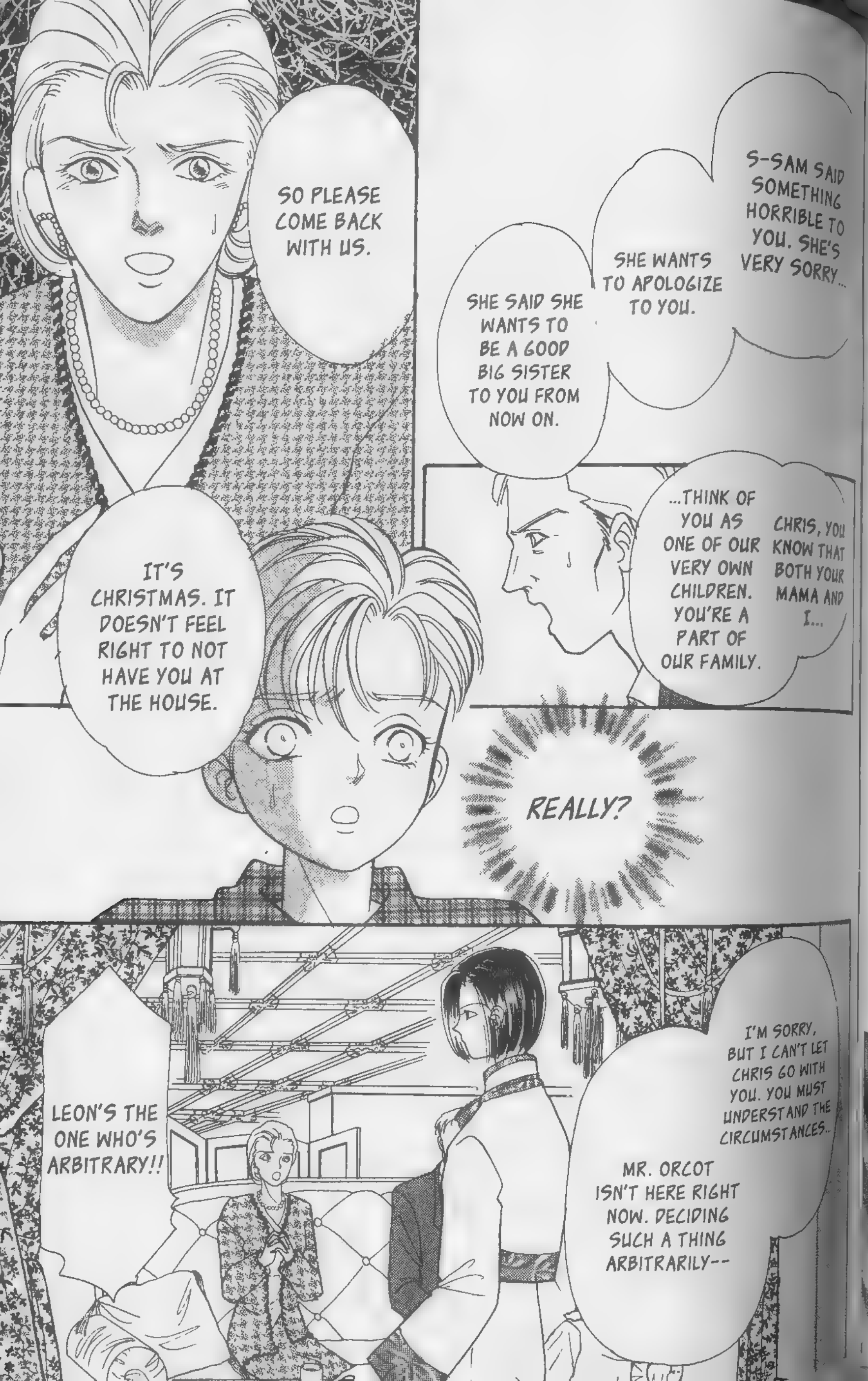

HEY, SANTA COMES TO THIS SHOP!
HE'S AN OLD MAN WITH A WHITE BEARD.
YEAH, I'VE SEEN HIM TOO!
HE CAME HERE ON A REINDEER.
PON-CHAN?
DID THE REINDEER HAVE A RED NOSE?
COUNT, CAN WE GO SEE HIM TODAY?! PLEASE!!!
HMM... YEAH, I THINK SO!
Hee hee!
WELL, WE ARE CLOSED FOR THE DAY... SURE, WHY NOT?!
REALLY?!
WHAT?
B-BUT...

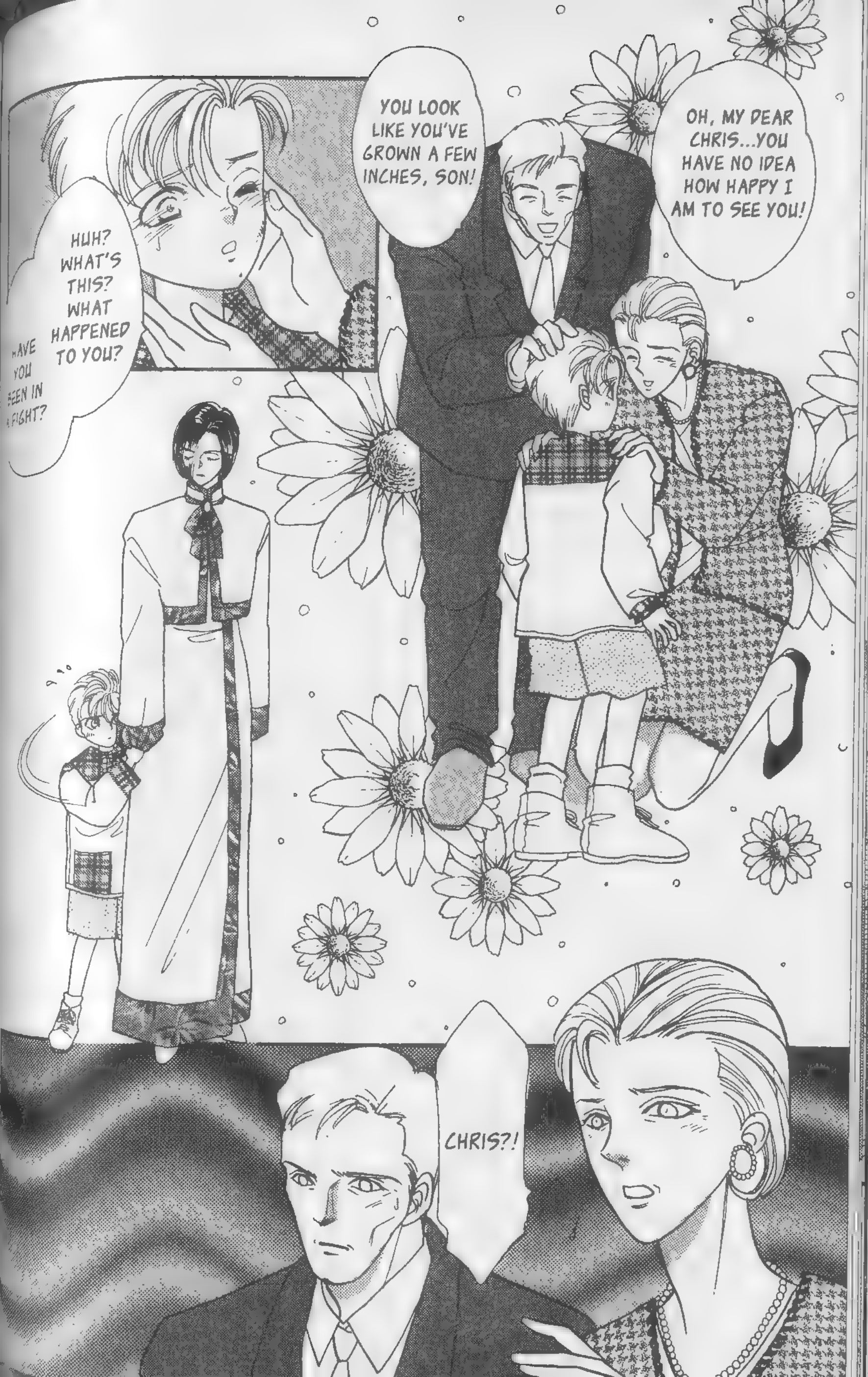

コン コン
!!
TALK ABOUT BAD TIMING...
OKAY, EVERYONE GO ON AHEAD WITHOUT ME. I'LL CATCH UP.
GO ON AHEAD **WHERE?**
GREETINGS, WELCOME TO COUNT D'S PET SHOP...
CHRIS!!

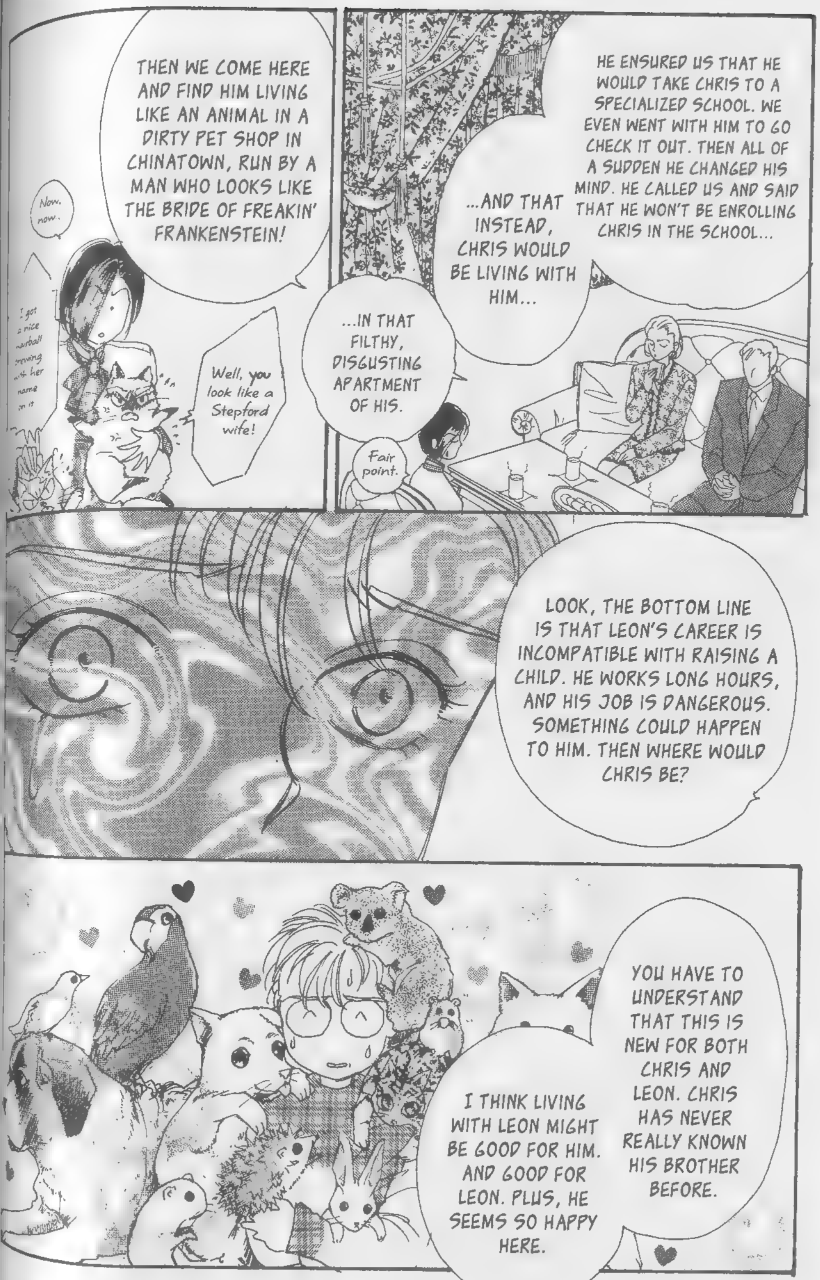

OH, CHRIS!!
PAPA?
MAMA!!

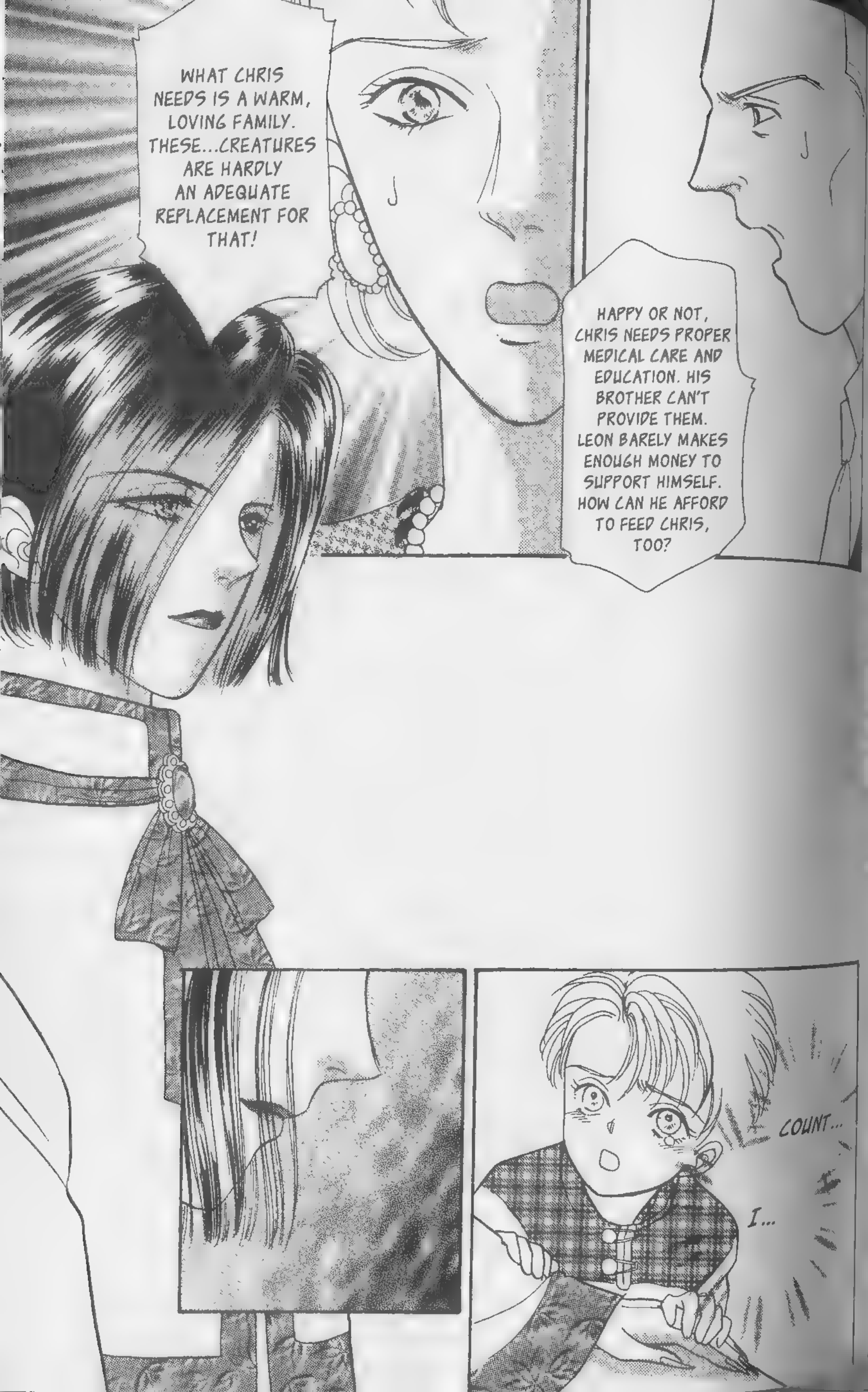

THANKS AGAIN, LEON. I OWE YOU ONE.
O PROBLEM. AVE A GOOD TIME.
OH, HELLO, LEON...
AREN'T YOU OFF DUTY TONIGHT?
I SWITCHED SHIFTS WITH ROY.
HIS FIANCÉE'S BEEN OUT OF TOWN. SHE'S FLYING BACK TONIGHT AND HE WANTS TO PICK HER UP AT THE AIRPORT.
HOW ROMANTIC! IT WAS REALLY NICE OF YOU TO SWITCH WITH HIM, LEON. AFTER ALL, IT IS CHRISTMAS EVE.
YEAH, WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE I HAD ANYTHING LINED UP. PERSONALLY, I'LL BE GLAD WHEN THE HOLIDAYS ARE OVER.
AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU'D BE SPENDING IT WITH YOUR BROTHER...AND THE COUNT.
SHADDAP.

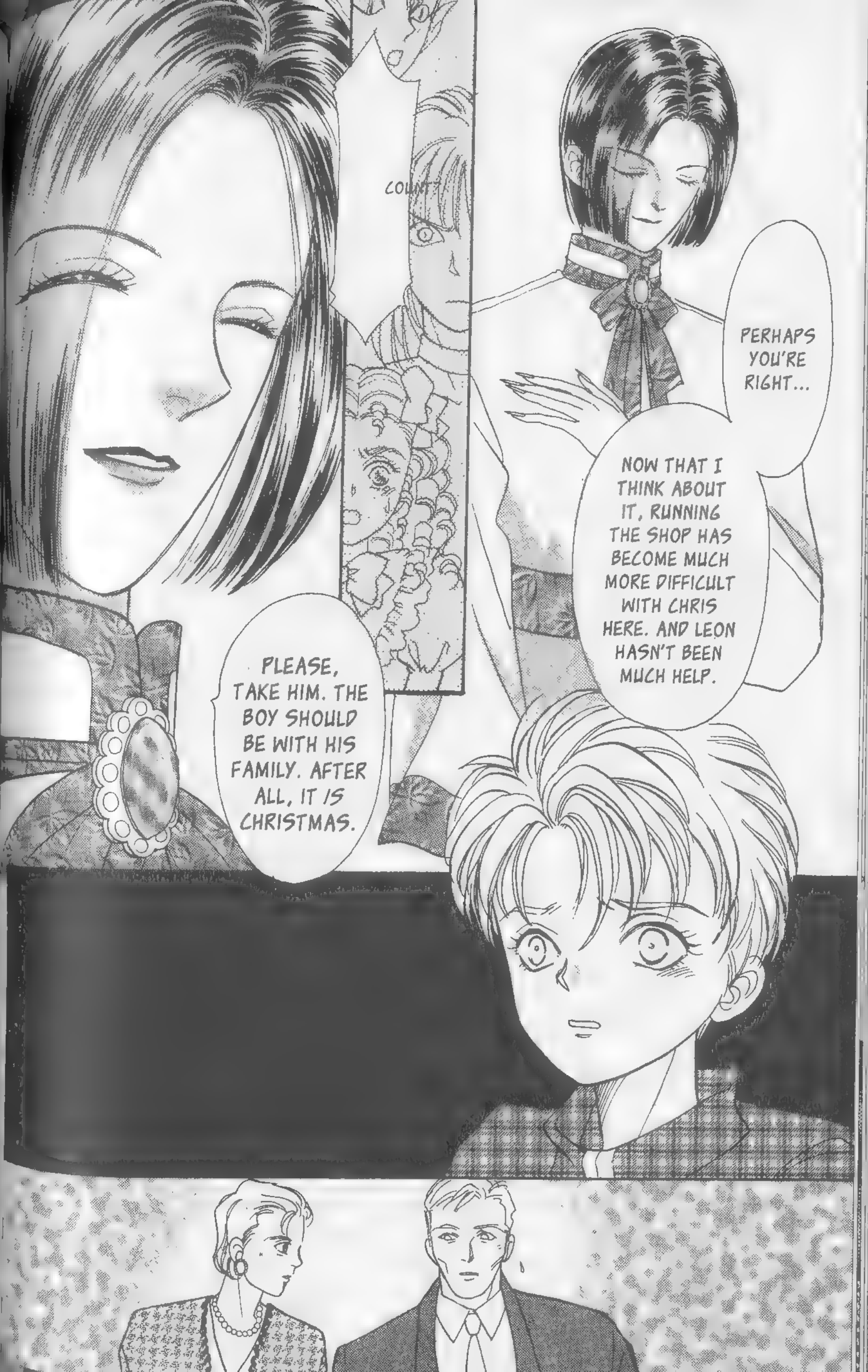

I HAD ENOUGH OF "CHRISTMAS WITH THE COUNT" LAST YEAR.
WHAT A NIGHTMARE THAT WAS...
FIRST, I WOUND UP GETTING DRAGGED ACROSS THE CITY, VISITING EVERYONE FROM THE LOCAL MOB BOSS TO A DOMINATRIX DENTIST.
THEN WE HAD A CRISIS INVOLVING SOME SORT OF DRAGON EGG, WHICH CULMINATED IN US BREAKING INTO SOME GUY'S HOUSE AND ME CHUCKING THE EGG INTO THE OCEAN.
NOT A NIGHT I'M EAGER TO RELIVE.
IF IT'S A CHOICE BETWEEN HANGING OUT WITH D OR WORKING THE LATE SHIFT BEFORE GOING HOME TO WATCH "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE" FOR THE 3 BILLIONTH TIME--RING THOSE BELLS, CLARENCE, BABY!

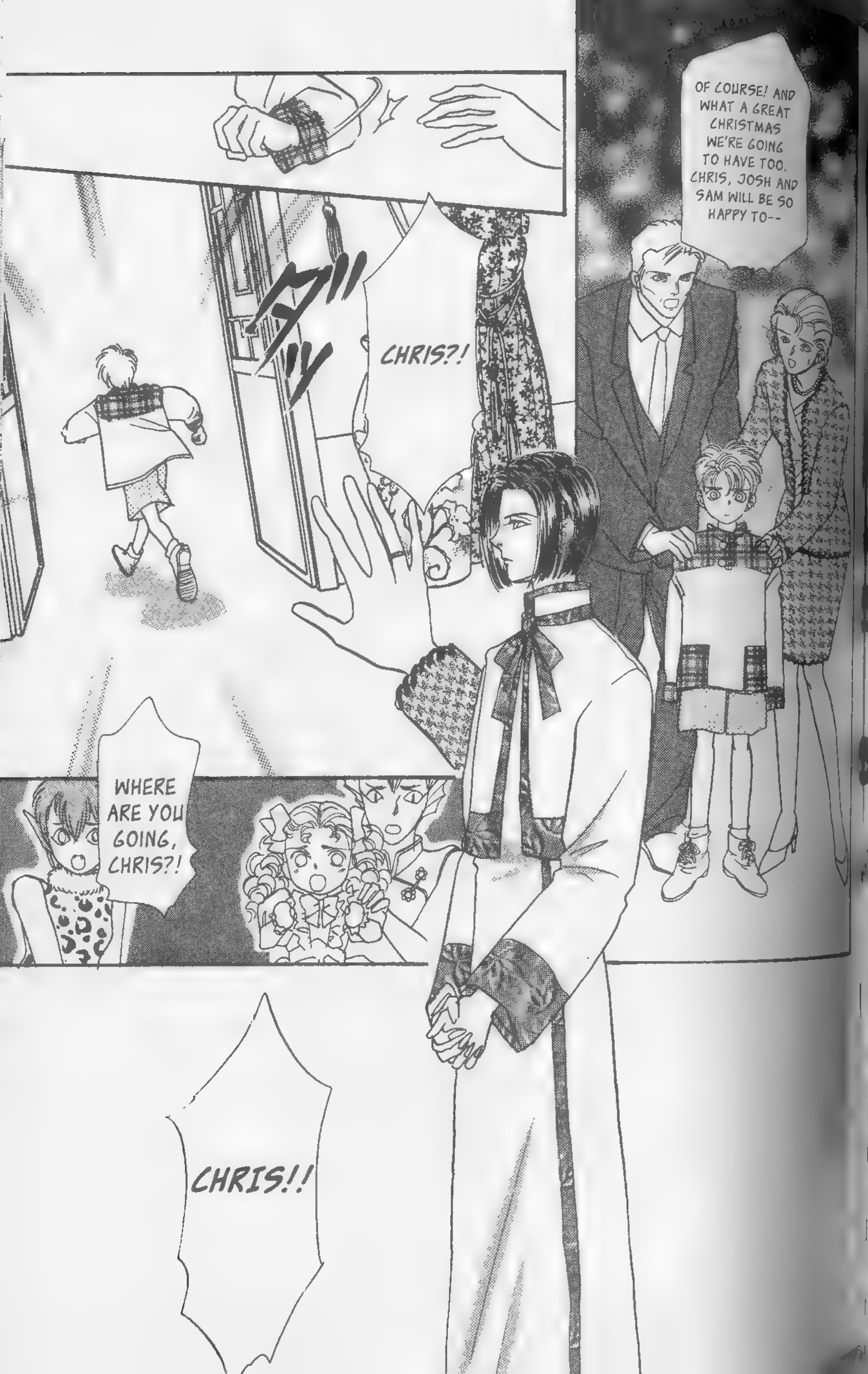

S-SAM SAID SOMETHING HORRIBLE TO YOU. SHE'S VERY SORRY...
SHE WANTS TO APOLOGIZE TO YOU.
SHE SAID SHE WANTS TO BE A GOOD BIG SISTER TO YOU FROM NOW ON.
SO PLEASE COME BACK WITH US.
CHRIS, YOU KNOW THAT BOTH YOUR MAMA AND I...
...THINK OF YOU AS ONE OF OUR VERY OWN CHILDREN. YOU'RE A PART OF OUR FAMILY.
IT'S CHRISTMAS. IT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT TO NOT HAVE YOU AT THE HOUSE.
REALLY?
I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T LET CHRIS GO WITH YOU. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE CIRCUMSTANCES...
MR. ORCOT ISN'T HERE RIGHT NOW. DECIDING SUCH A THING ARBITRARILY--
LEON'S THE ONE WHO'S ARBITRARY!!

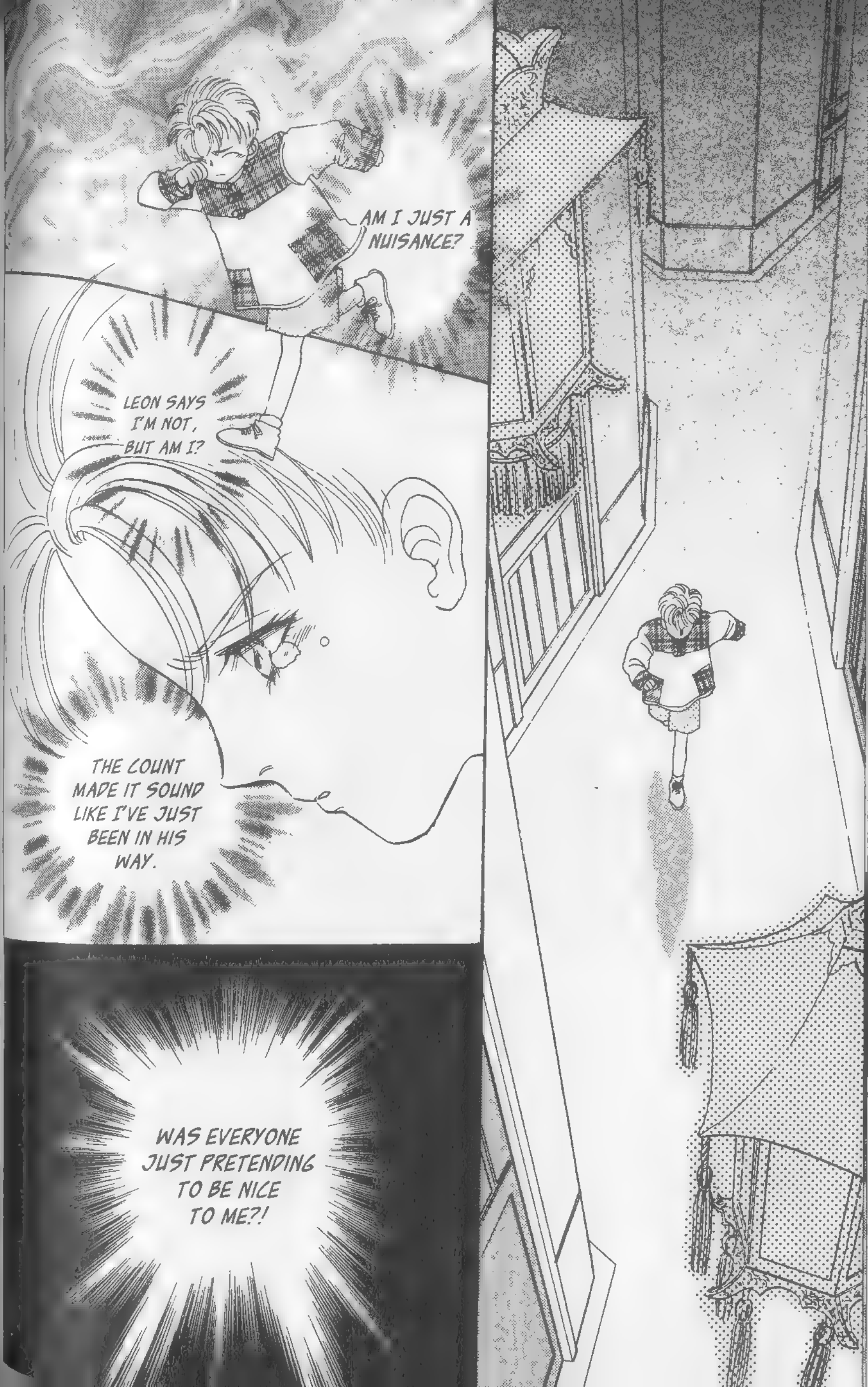

OH, MY DEAR CHRIS...YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HAPPY I AM TO SEE YOU!
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE GROWN A FEW INCHES, SON!
HUH? WHAT'S THIS? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
HAVE YOU EEN IN FIGHT?
CHRIS?!

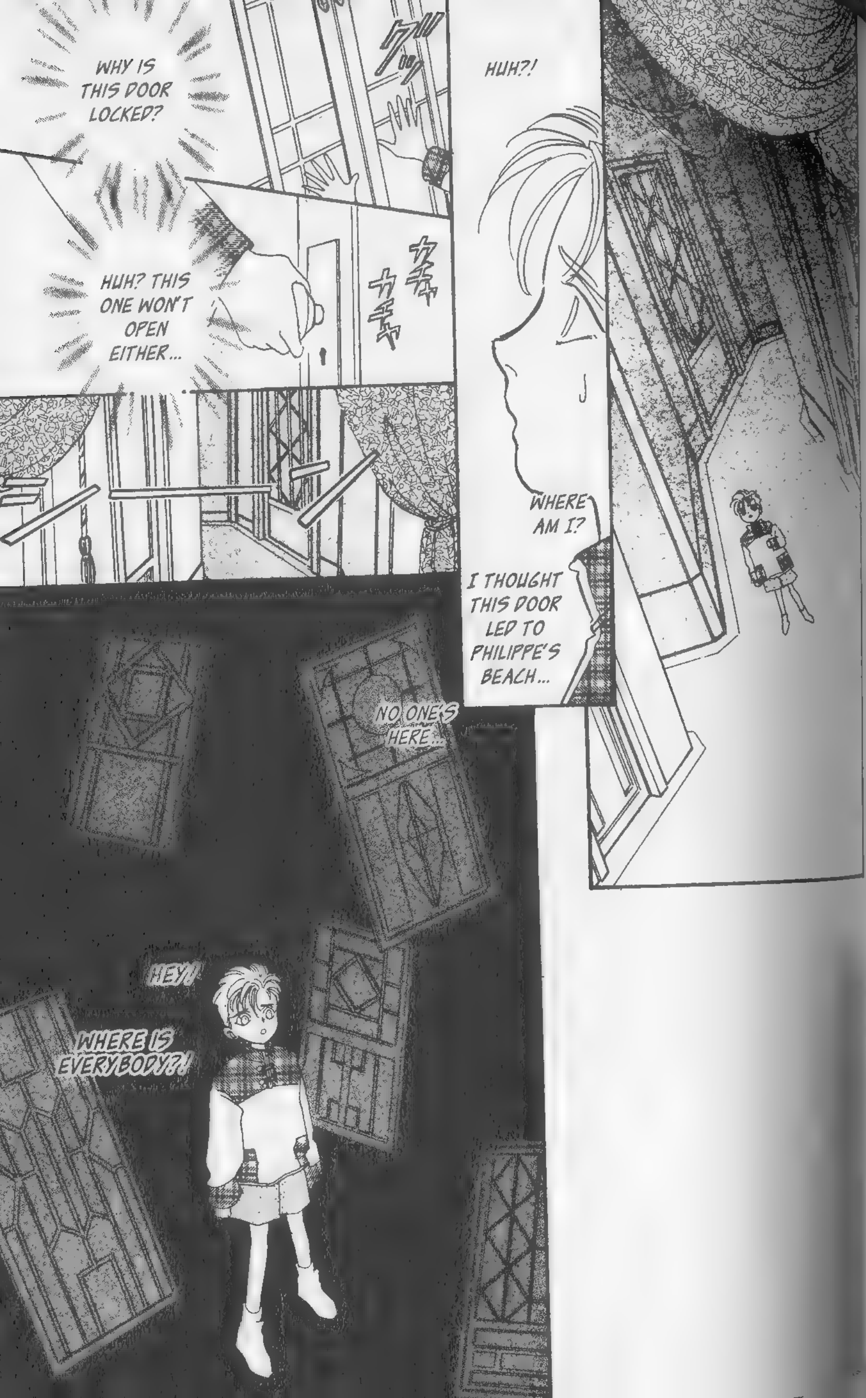

HE ENSURED US THAT HE WOULD TAKE CHRIS TO A SPECIALIZED SCHOOL. WE EVEN WENT WITH HIM TO GO CHECK IT OUT. THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN HE CHANGED HIS MIND. HE CALLED US AND SAID THAT HE WON'T BE ENROLLING CHRIS IN THE SCHOOL...
...AND THAT INSTEAD, CHRIS WOULD BE LIVING WITH HIM...
...IN THAT FILTHY, DISGUSTING APARTMENT OF HIS.
Fair point.
THEN WE COME HERE AND FIND HIM LIVING LIKE AN ANIMAL IN A DIRTY PET SHOP IN CHINATOWN, RUN BY A MAN WHO LOOKS LIKE THE BRIDE OF FREAKIN' FRANKENSTEIN!
Well, you look like a Stepford wife!
Now, now..
I got a nice hairball growing with her name on it
LOOK, THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT LEON'S CAREER IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH RAISING A CHILD. HE WORKS LONG HOURS, AND HIS JOB IS DANGEROUS. SOMETHING COULD HAPPEN TO HIM. THEN WHERE WOULD CHRIS BE?
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS NEW FOR BOTH CHRIS AND LEON. CHRIS HAS NEVER REALLY KNOWN HIS BROTHER BEFORE.
I THINK LIVING WITH LEON MIGHT BE GOOD FOR HIM. AND GOOD FOR LEON. PLUS, HE SEEMS SO HAPPY HERE.

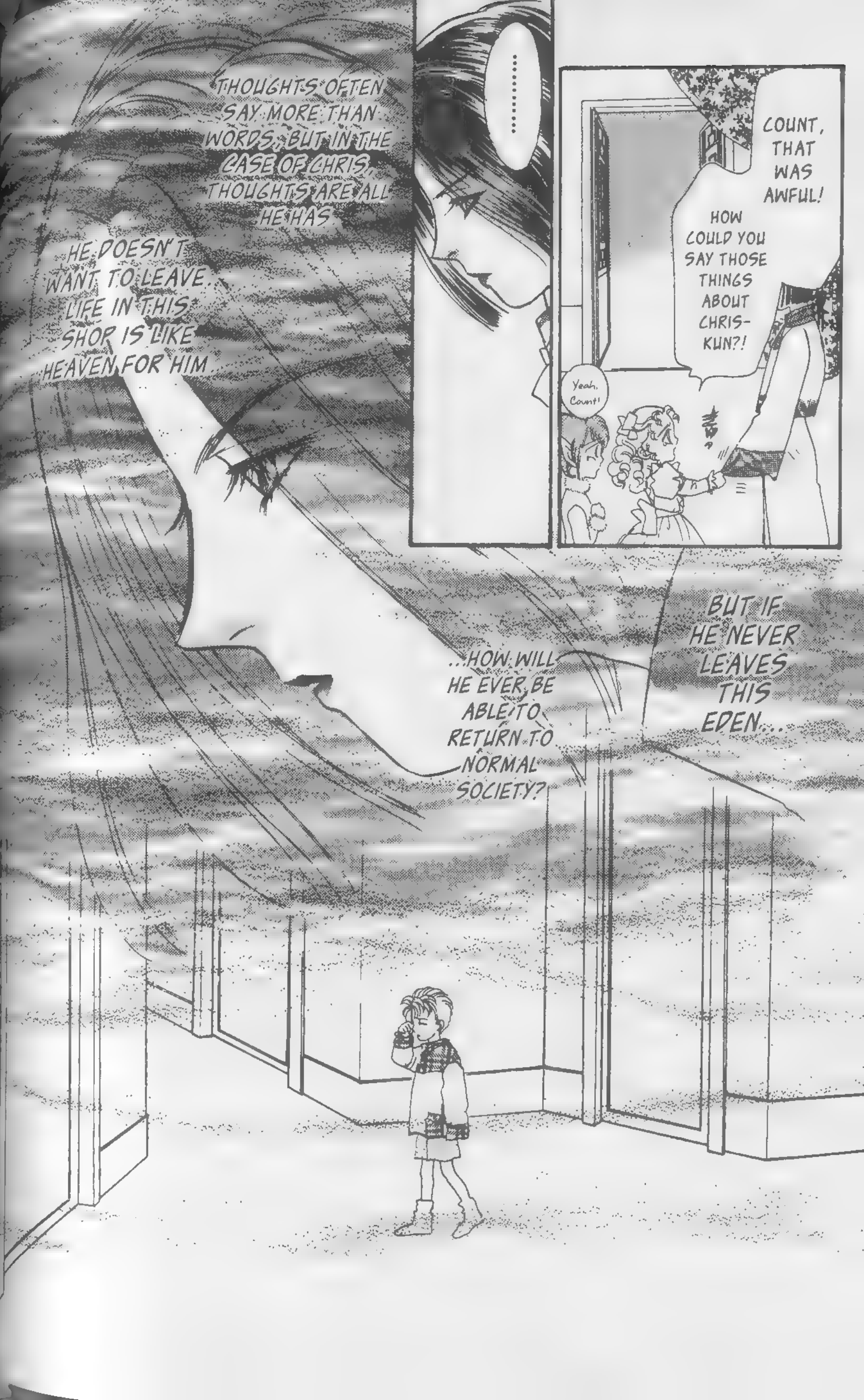

WHAT CHRIS NEEDS IS A WARM, LOVING FAMILY. THESE...CREATURES ARE HARDLY AN ADEQUATE REPLACEMENT FOR THAT!
HAPPY OR NOT, CHRIS NEEDS PROPER MEDICAL CARE AND EDUCATION. HIS BROTHER CAN'T PROVIDE THEM. LEON BARELY MAKES ENOUGH MONEY TO SUPPORT HIMSELF. HOW CAN HE AFFORD TO FEED CHRIS, TOO?
COUNT...
I...

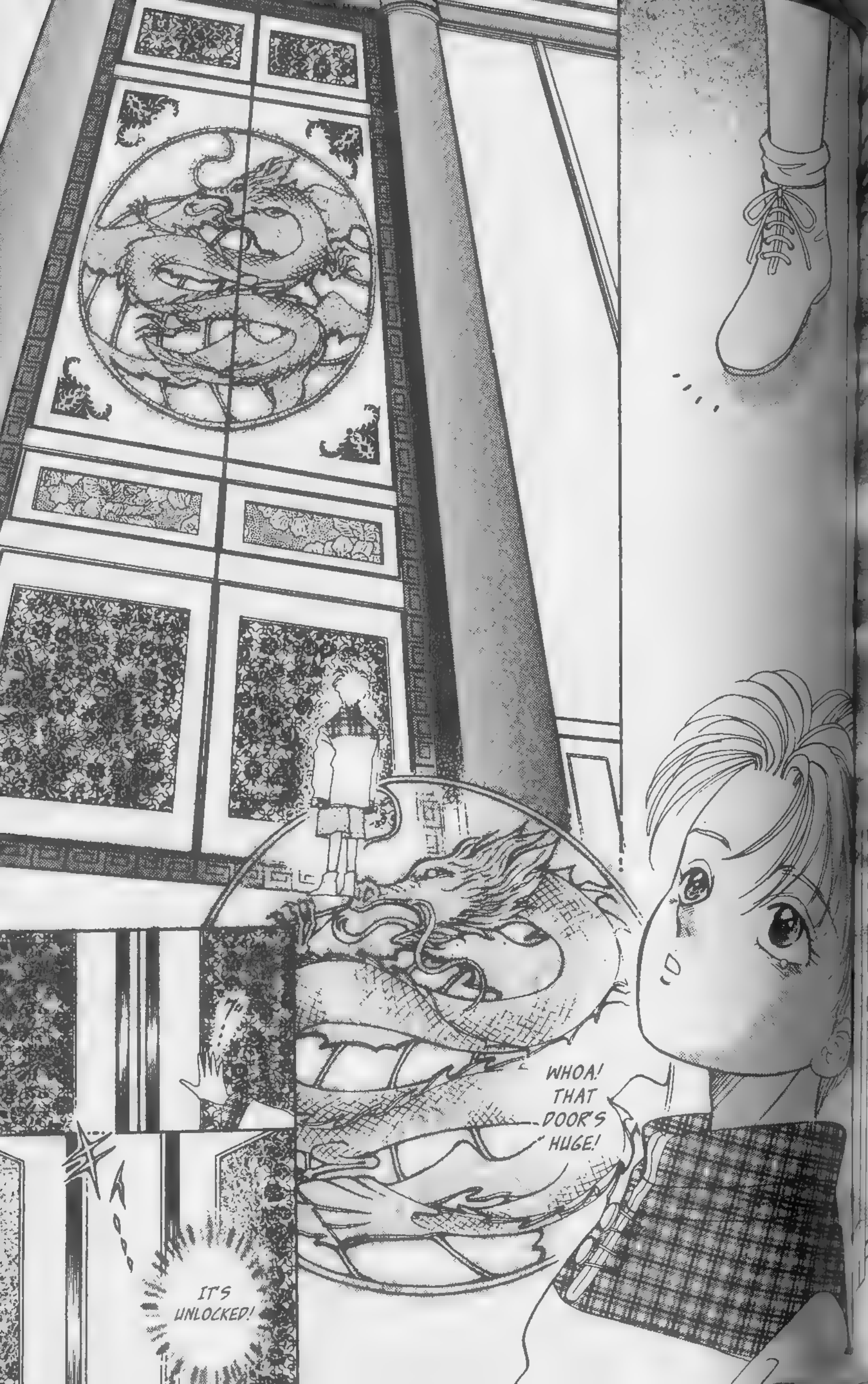

PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT...
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, RUNNING THE SHOP HAS BECOME MUCH MORE DIFFICULT WITH CHRIS HERE. AND LEON HASN'T BEEN MUCH HELP.
COUNT?
PLEASE, TAKE HIM. THE BOY SHOULD BE WITH HIS FAMILY. AFTER ALL, IT IS CHRISTMAS.

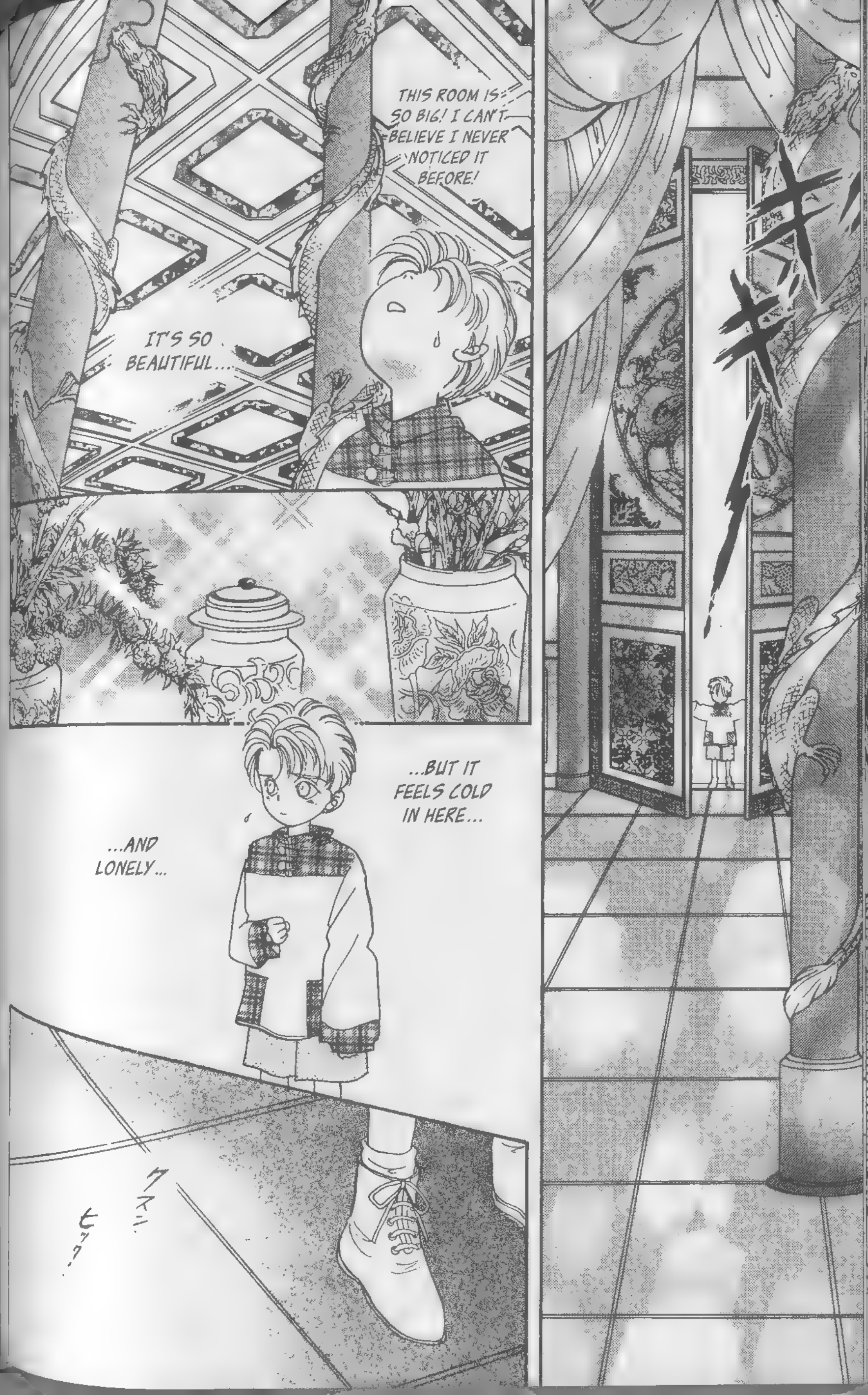

OF COURSE! AND WHAT A GREAT CHRISTMAS WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TOO. CHRIS, JOSH AND SAM WILL BE SO HAPPY TO--
ダッ
CHRIS?!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, CHRIS?!
CHRIS!!

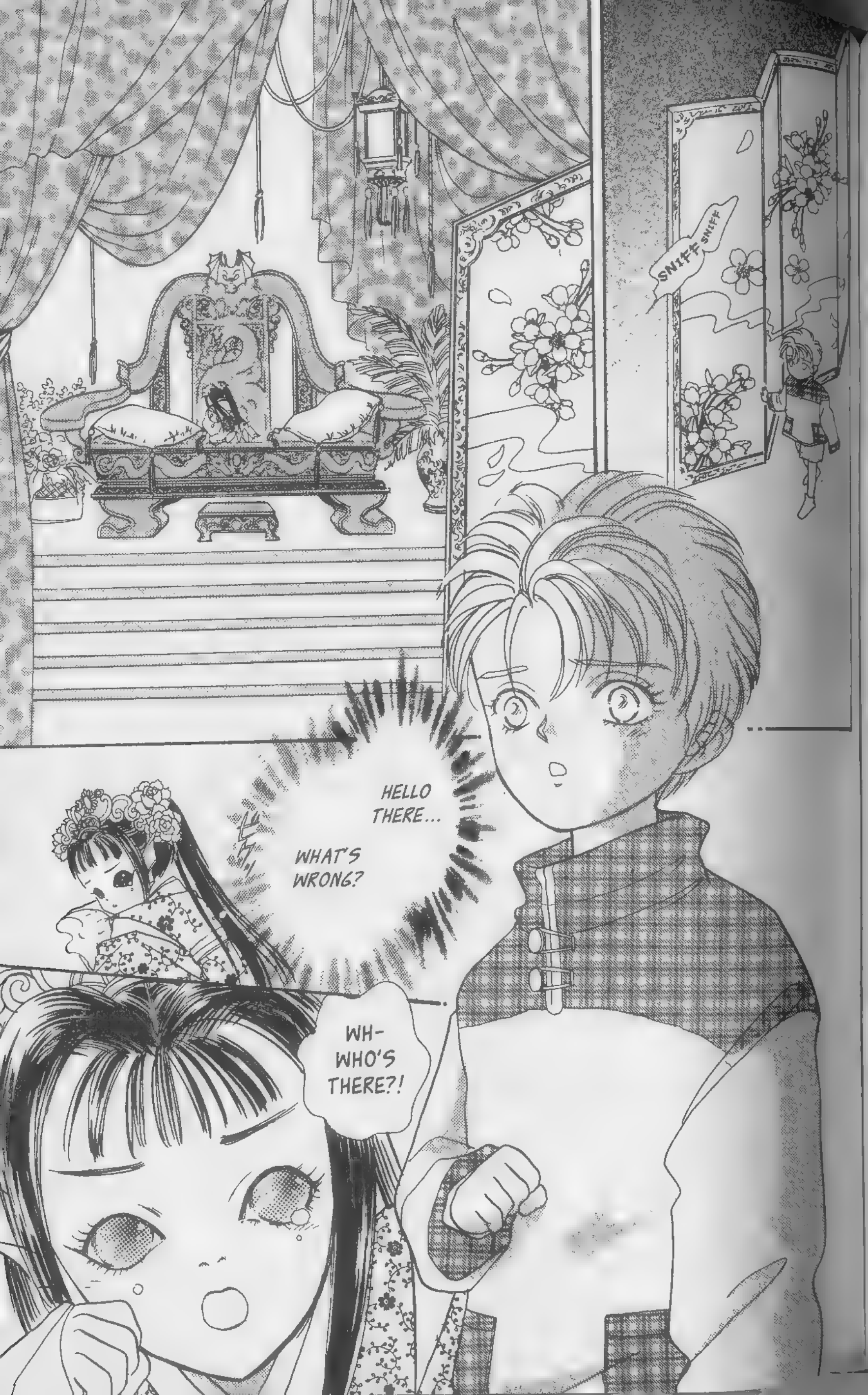

AM I JUST A NUISANCE?
LEON SAYS I'M NOT, BUT AM I?
THE COUNT MADE IT SOUND LIKE I'VE JUST BEEN IN HIS WAY.
WAS EVERYONE JUST PRETENDING TO BE NICE TO ME?!

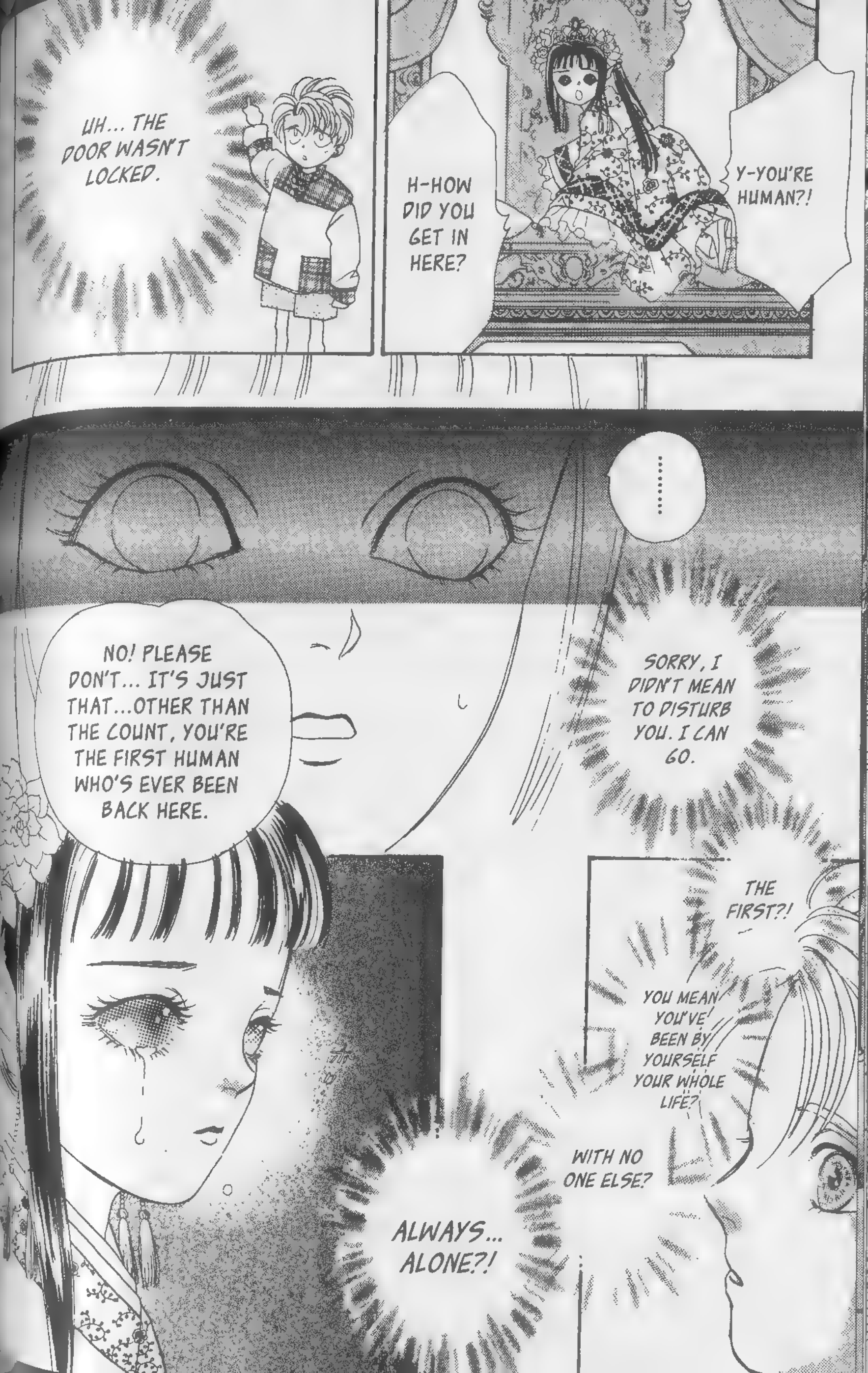

HUH?!
WHERE AM I?
I THOUGHT THIS DOOR LED TO PHILIPPE'S BEACH...
WHY IS THIS DOOR LOCKED?
カチャ カチャ
HUH? THIS ONE WON'T OPEN EITHER...
NO ONE'S HERE...
HEY!
WHERE IS EVERYBODY?!

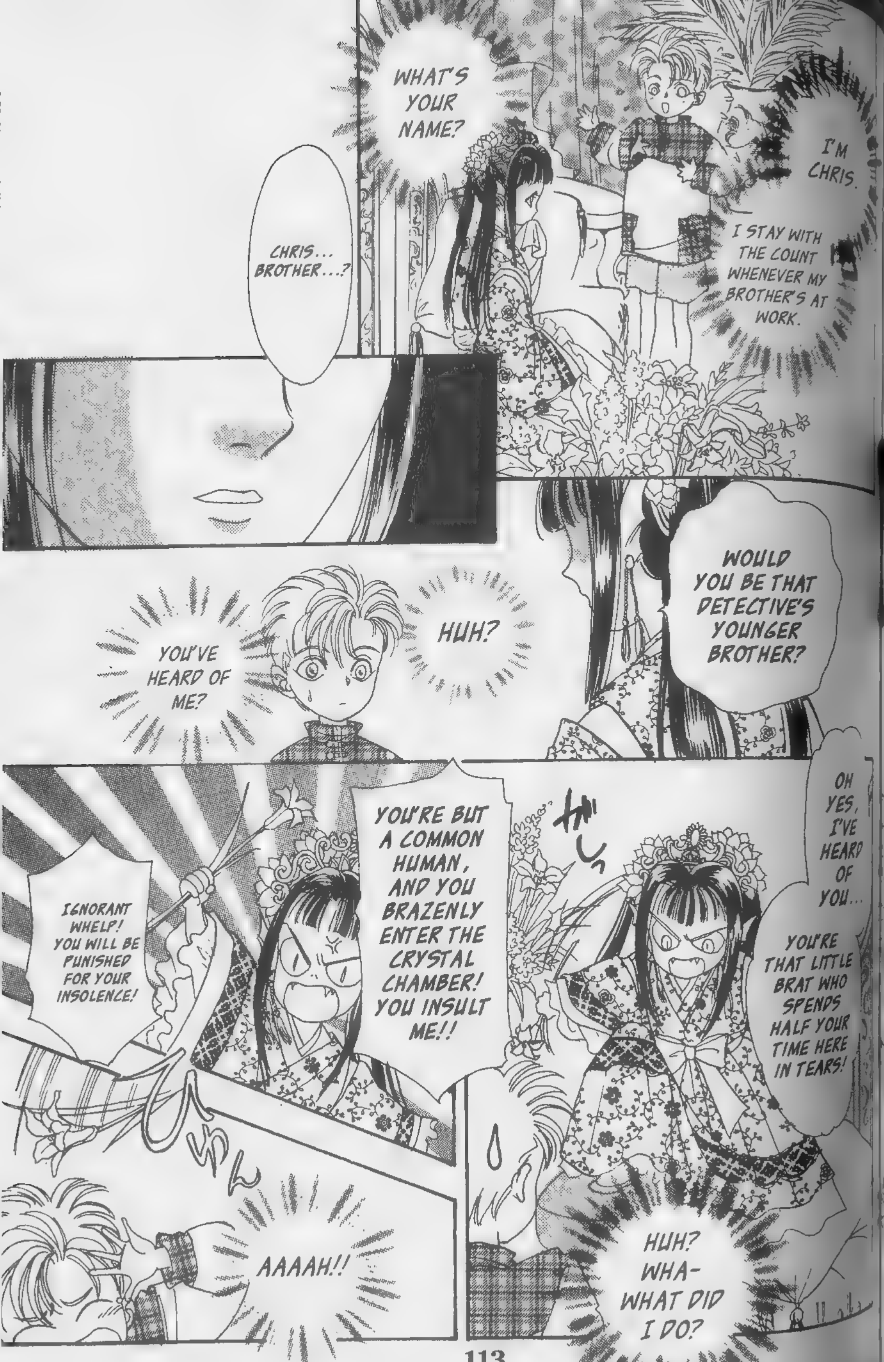

COUNT, THAT WAS AWFUL!
HOW COULD YOU SAY THOSE THINGS ABOUT CHRIS-KUN?!
Yeah, Count!
......
THOUGHTS OFTEN SAY MORE THAN WORDS, BUT IN THE CASE OF CHRIS, THOUGHTS ARE ALL HE HAS
HE DOESN'T WANT TO LEAVE. LIFE IN THIS SHOP IS LIKE HEAVEN FOR HIM
BUT IF HE NEVER LEAVES THIS EDEN...
...HOW WILL HE EVER BE ABLE TO RETURN TO NORMAL SOCIETY?

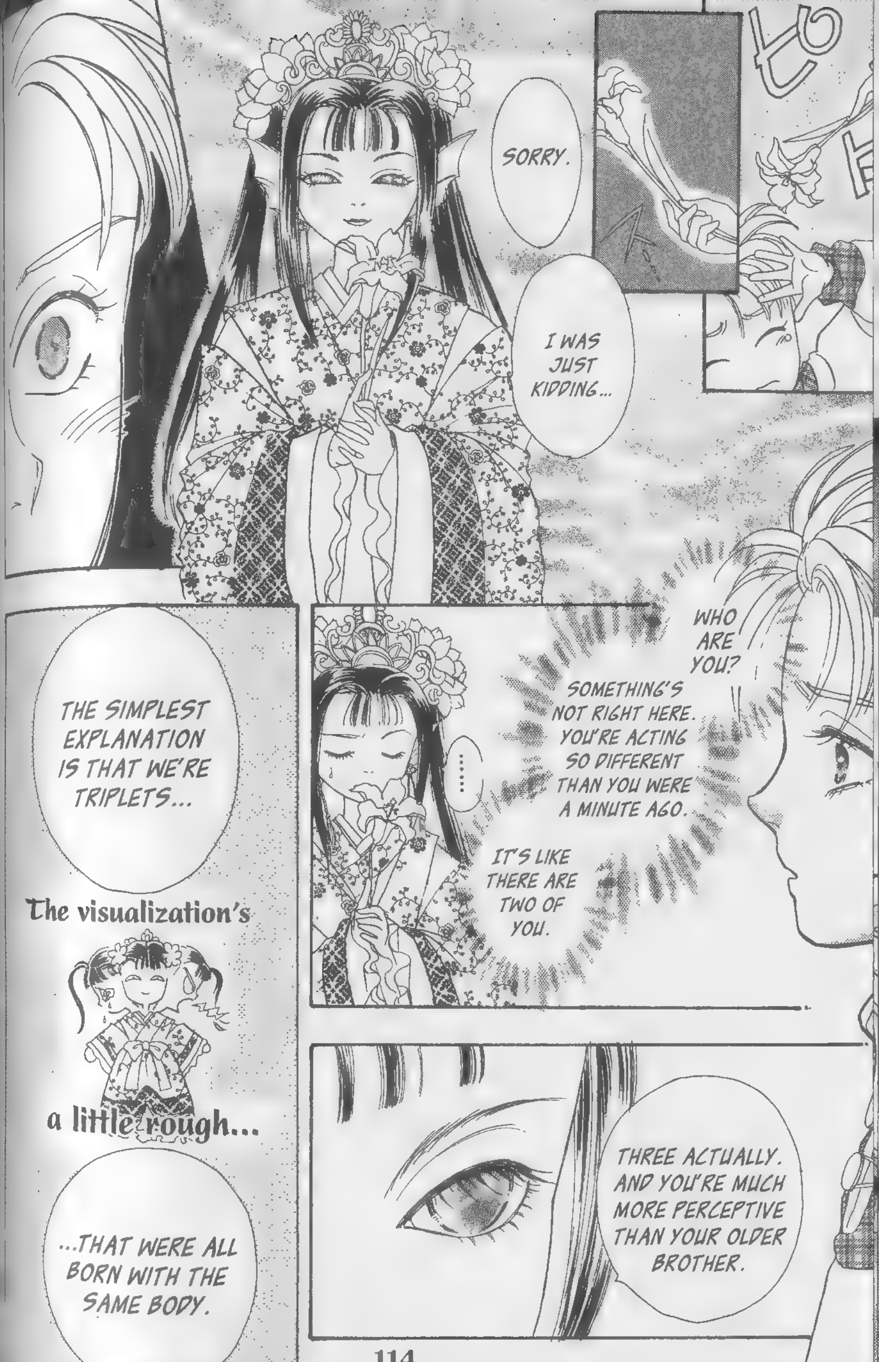

WHOA! THAT DOOR'S HUGE!
IT'S UNLOCKED!

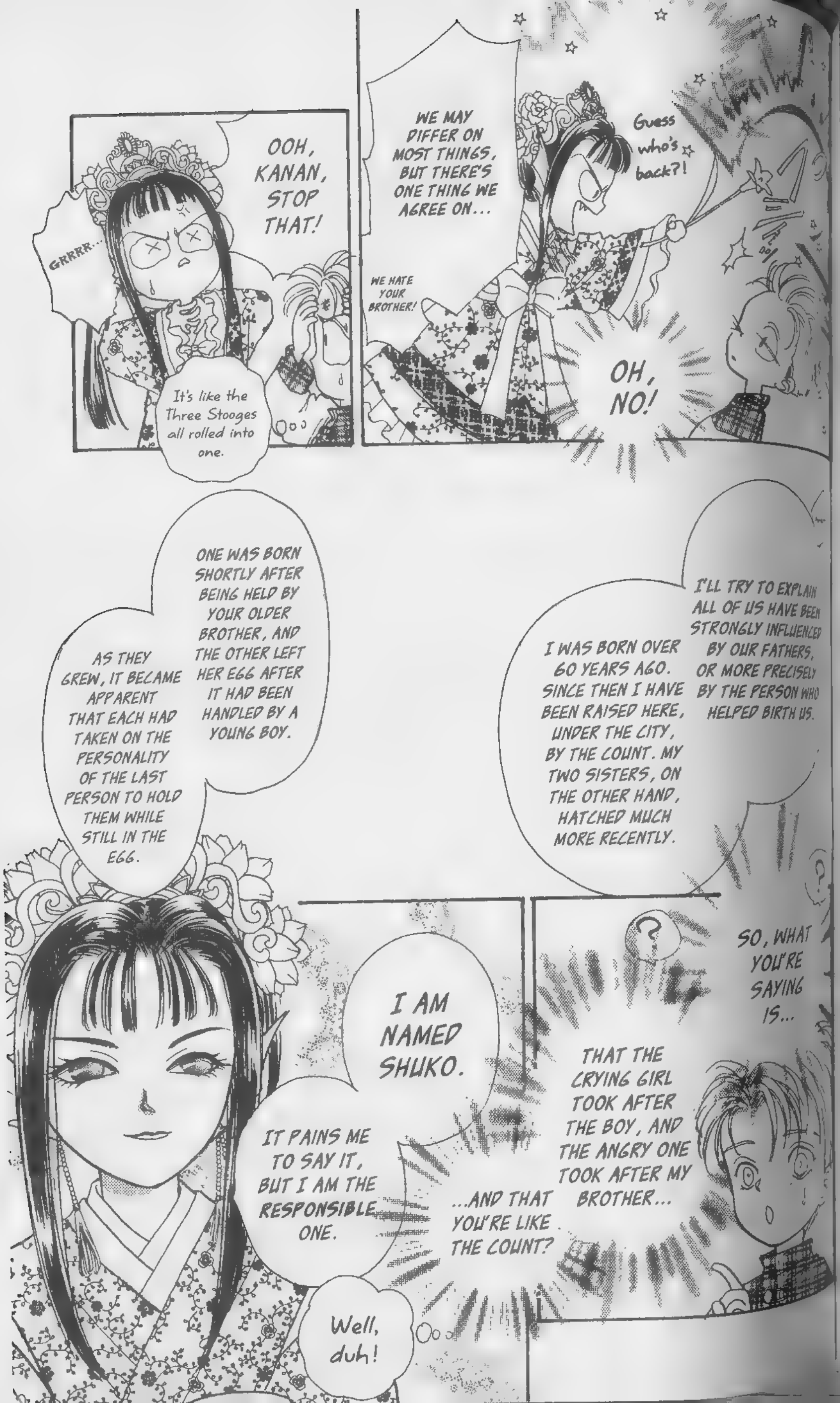

THIS ROOM IS SO BIG! I CAN'T BELIEVE I NEVER NOTICED IT BEFORE!
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL...
...BUT IT FEELS COLD IN HERE...
...AND LONELY...
クスン
ヒック

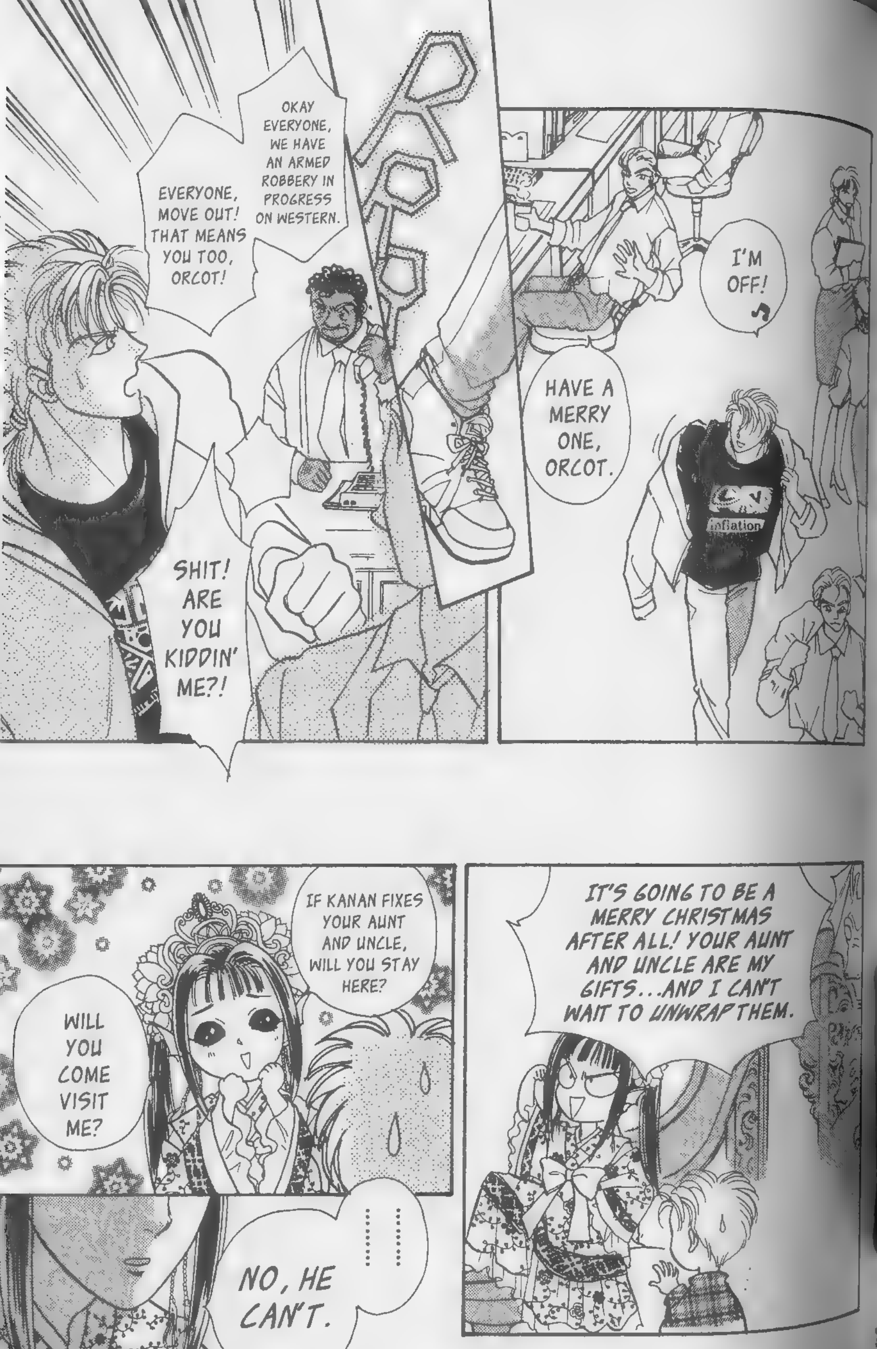

SNIFF SNIFF
HELLO THERE... WHAT'S WRONG?
WH-WHO'S THERE?!

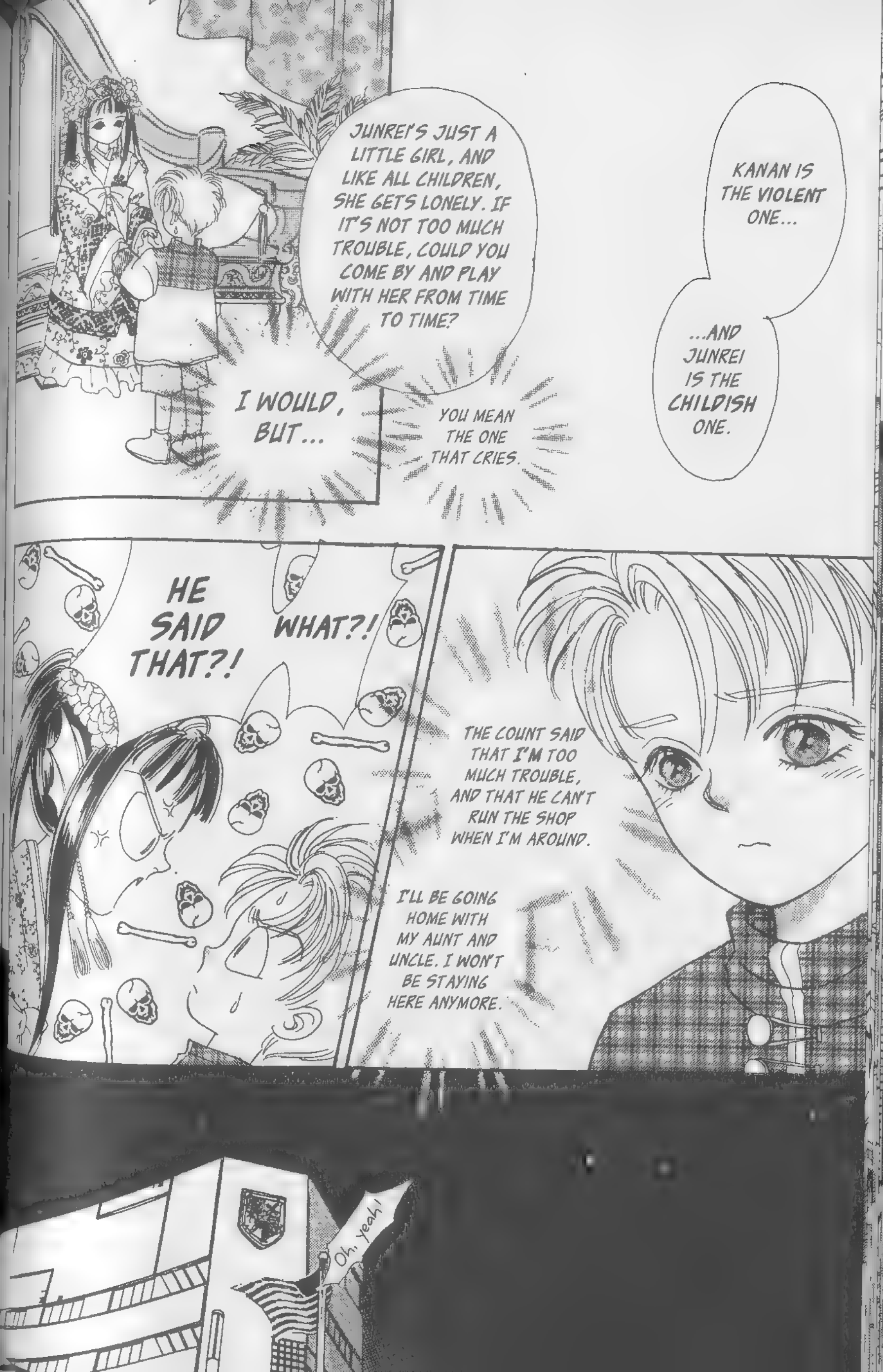

Y-YOU'RE HUMAN?!
H-HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?
UH... THE DOOR WASN'T LOCKED.
……
SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO DISTURB YOU. I CAN GO.
NO! PLEASE DON'T... IT'S JUST THAT...OTHER THAN THE COUNT, YOU'RE THE FIRST HUMAN WHO'S EVER BEEN BACK HERE.
THE FIRST?!
YOU MEAN YOU'VE BEEN BY YOURSELF YOUR WHOLE LIFE?
WITH NO ONE ELSE?
ALWAYS... ALONE?!

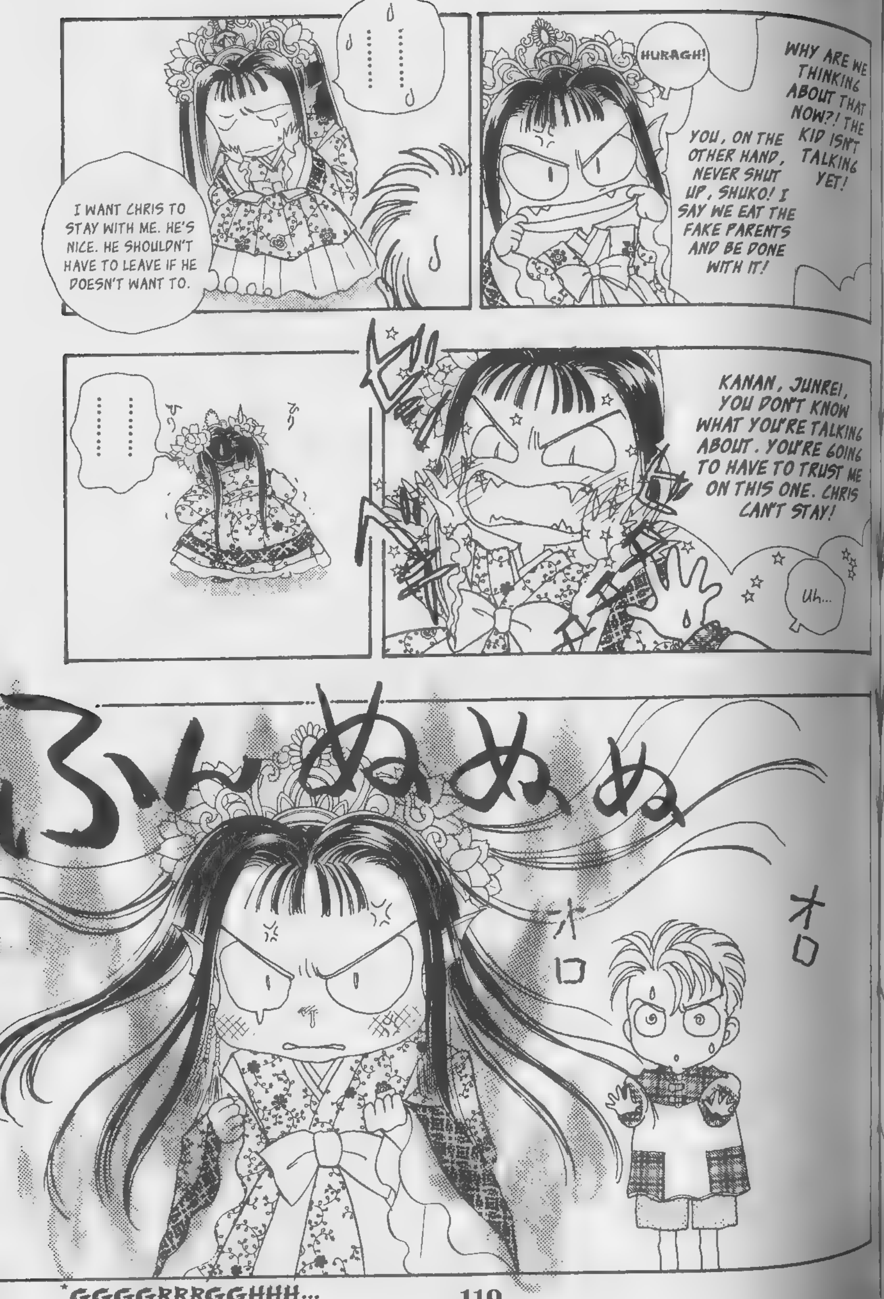

I'M CHRIS.
I STAY WITH THE COUNT WHENEVER MY BROTHER'S AT WORK.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
CHRIS... BROTHER...?
WOULD YOU BE THAT DETECTIVE'S YOUNGER BROTHER?
HUH?
YOU'VE HEARD OF ME?
OH YES, I'VE HEARD OF YOU...
YOU'RE THAT LITTLE BRAT WHO SPENDS HALF YOUR TIME HERE IN TEARS!
HUH? WHA-WHAT DID I DO?
YOU'RE BUT A COMMON HUMAN, AND YOU BRAZENLY ENTER THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER! YOU INSULT ME!!
IGNORANT WHELP! YOU WILL BE PUNISHED FOR YOUR INSOLENCE!
AAAAH!!


SORRY.
I WAS JUST KIDDING...
WHO ARE YOU?
SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT HERE. YOU'RE ACTING SO DIFFERENT THAN YOU WERE A MINUTE AGO.
IT'S LIKE THERE ARE TWO OF YOU.
......
THREE ACTUALLY. AND YOU'RE MUCH MORE PERCEPTIVE THAN YOUR OLDER BROTHER.
THE SIMPLEST EXPLANATION IS THAT WE'RE TRIPLETS...
The visualization's a little rough...
...THAT WERE ALL BORN WITH THE SAME BODY.


Guess who's back?!
WE MAY DIFFER ON MOST THINGS, BUT THERE'S ONE THING WE AGREE ON...
WE HATE YOUR BROTHER!
OH, NO!
OOH, KANAN, STOP THAT!
GRRRR...
It's like the Three Stooges all rolled into one.
I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN ALL OF US HAVE BEEN STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY OUR FATHERS, OR MORE PRECISELY BY THE PERSON WHO HELPED BIRTH US.
I WAS BORN OVER 60 YEARS AGO. SINCE THEN I HAVE BEEN RAISED HERE, UNDER THE CITY, BY THE COUNT. MY TWO SISTERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HATCHED MUCH MORE RECENTLY.
ONE WAS BORN SHORTLY AFTER BEING HELD BY YOUR OLDER BROTHER, AND THE OTHER LEFT HER EGG AFTER IT HAD BEEN HANDLED BY A YOUNG BOY.
AS THEY GREW, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT EACH HAD TAKEN ON THE PERSONALITY OF THE LAST PERSON TO HOLD THEM WHILE STILL IN THE EGG.
SO, WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS...
THAT THE CRYING GIRL TOOK AFTER THE BOY, AND THE ANGRY ONE TOOK AFTER MY BROTHER...
...AND THAT YOU'RE LIKE THE COUNT?
I AM NAMED SHUKO.
IT PAINS ME TO SAY IT, BUT I AM THE RESPONSIBLE ONE.
Well, duh!


I'M OFF! ♪
HAVE A MERRY ONE, ORCOT.
inflation
OKAY EVERYONE, WE HAVE AN ARMED ROBBERY IN PROGRESS ON WESTERN.
EVERYONE, MOVE OUT! THAT MEANS YOU TOO, ORCOT!
SHIT! ARE YOU KIDDIN' ME?!
IT'S GOING TO BE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AFTER ALL! YOUR AUNT AND UNCLE ARE MY GIFTS...AND I CAN'T WAIT TO UNWRAP THEM.
IF KANAN FIXES YOUR AUNT AND UNCLE, WILL YOU STAY HERE?
WILL YOU COME VISIT ME?
......
NO, HE CAN'T.


KANAN IS THE VIOLENT ONE...
...AND JUNREI IS THE CHILDISH ONE.
JUNREI'S JUST A LITTLE GIRL, AND LIKE ALL CHILDREN, SHE GETS LONELY. IF IT'S NOT TOO MUCH TROUBLE, COULD YOU COME BY AND PLAY WITH HER FROM TIME TO TIME?
YOU MEAN THE ONE THAT CRIES.
I WOULD, BUT...
THE COUNT SAID THAT I'M TOO MUCH TROUBLE, AND THAT HE CAN'T RUN THE SHOP WHEN I'M AROUND.
I'LL BE GOING HOME WITH MY AUNT AND UNCLE. I WON'T BE STAYING HERE ANYMORE.
WHAT?!
HE SAID THAT?!
Oh, yeah!


WHY ARE WE THINKING ABOUT THAT NOW?! THE KID ISN'T TALKING YET!
HURAGH!
YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, NEVER SHUT UP, SHUKO! I SAY WE EAT THE FAKE PARENTS AND BE DONE WITH IT!
......
I WANT CHRIS TO STAY WITH ME. HE'S NICE. HE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO LEAVE IF HE DOESN'T WANT TO.
KANAN, JUNREI, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TRUST ME ON THIS ONE. CHRIS CAN'T STAY!
Uh...
......
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オロ
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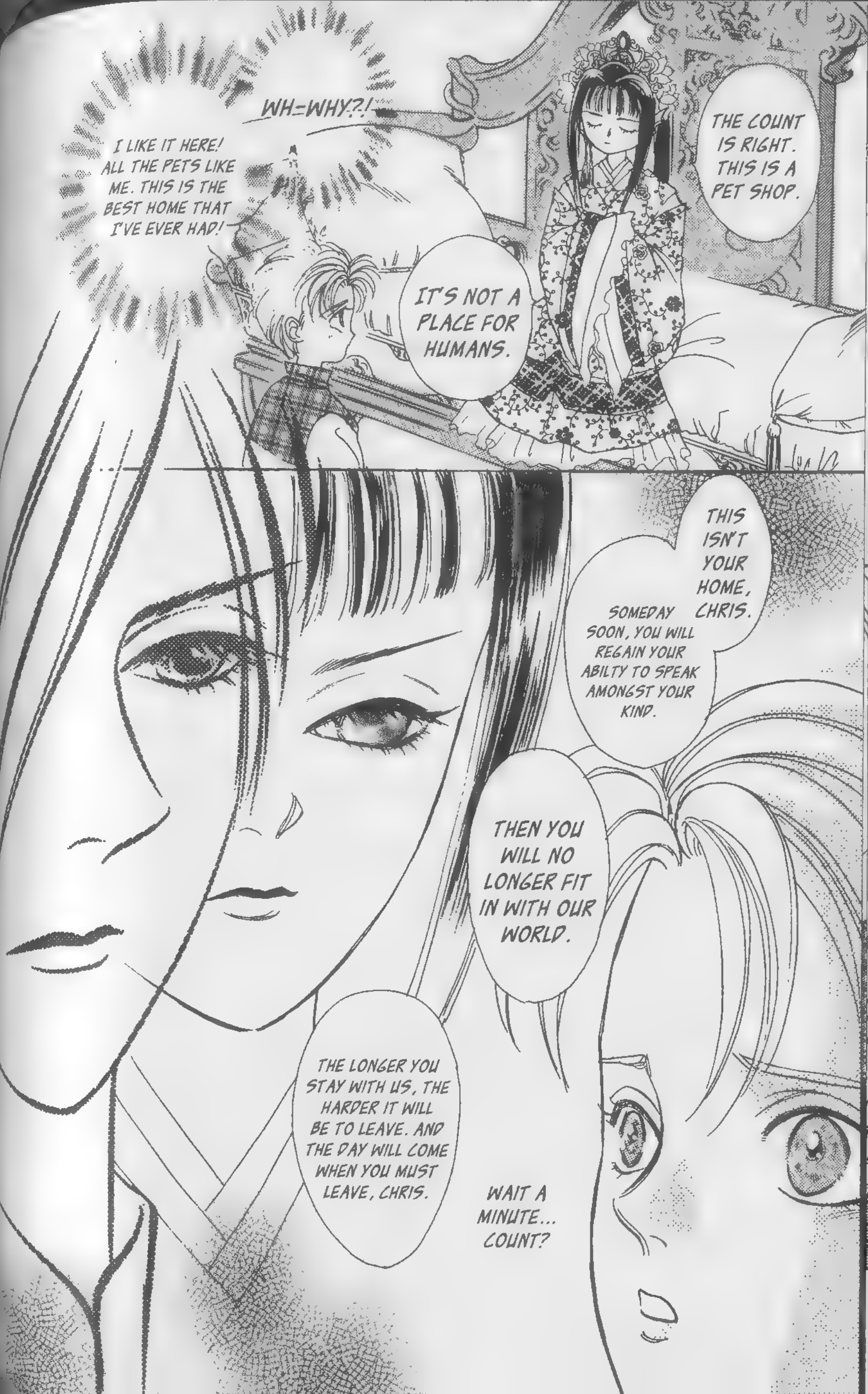
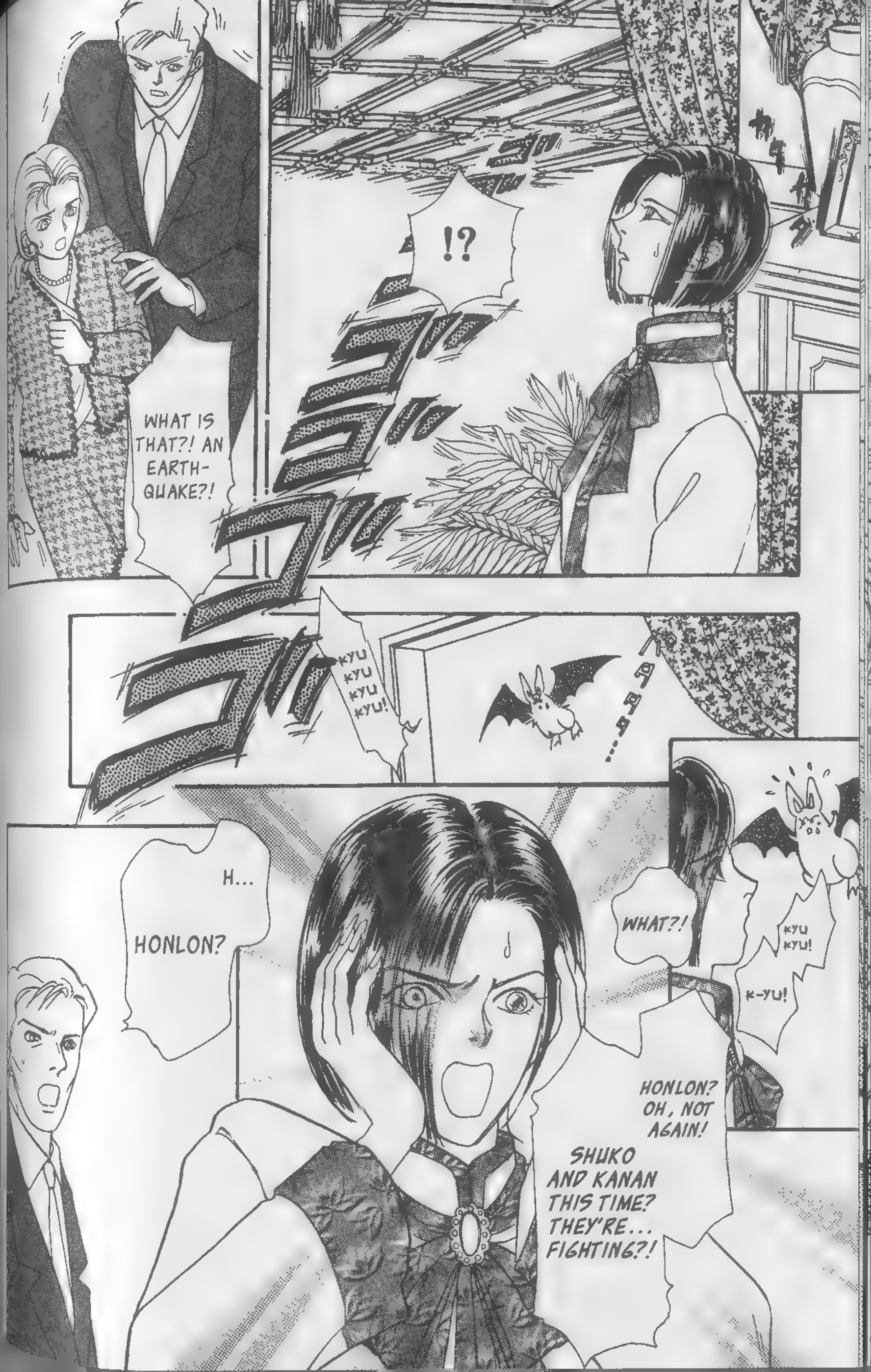
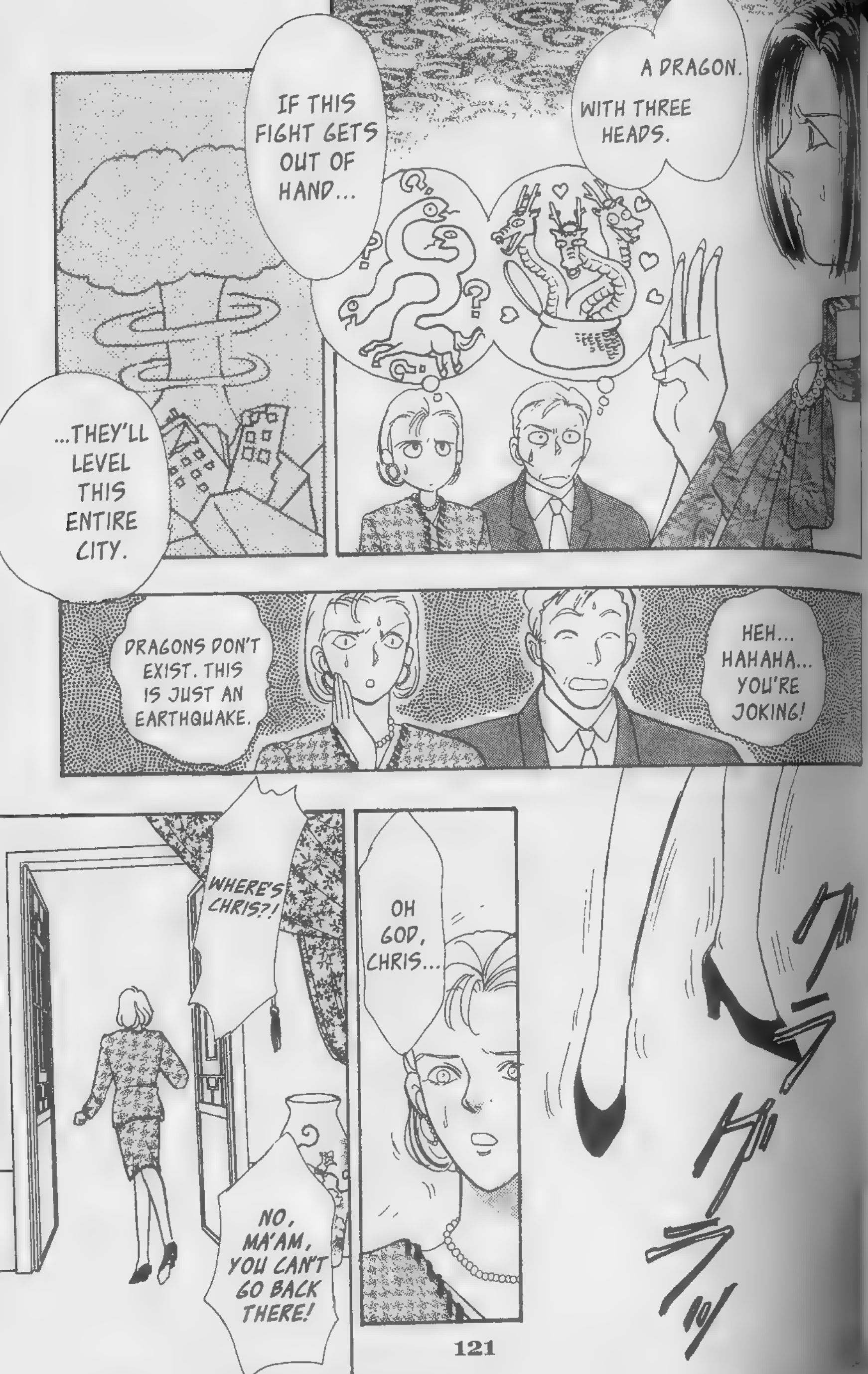
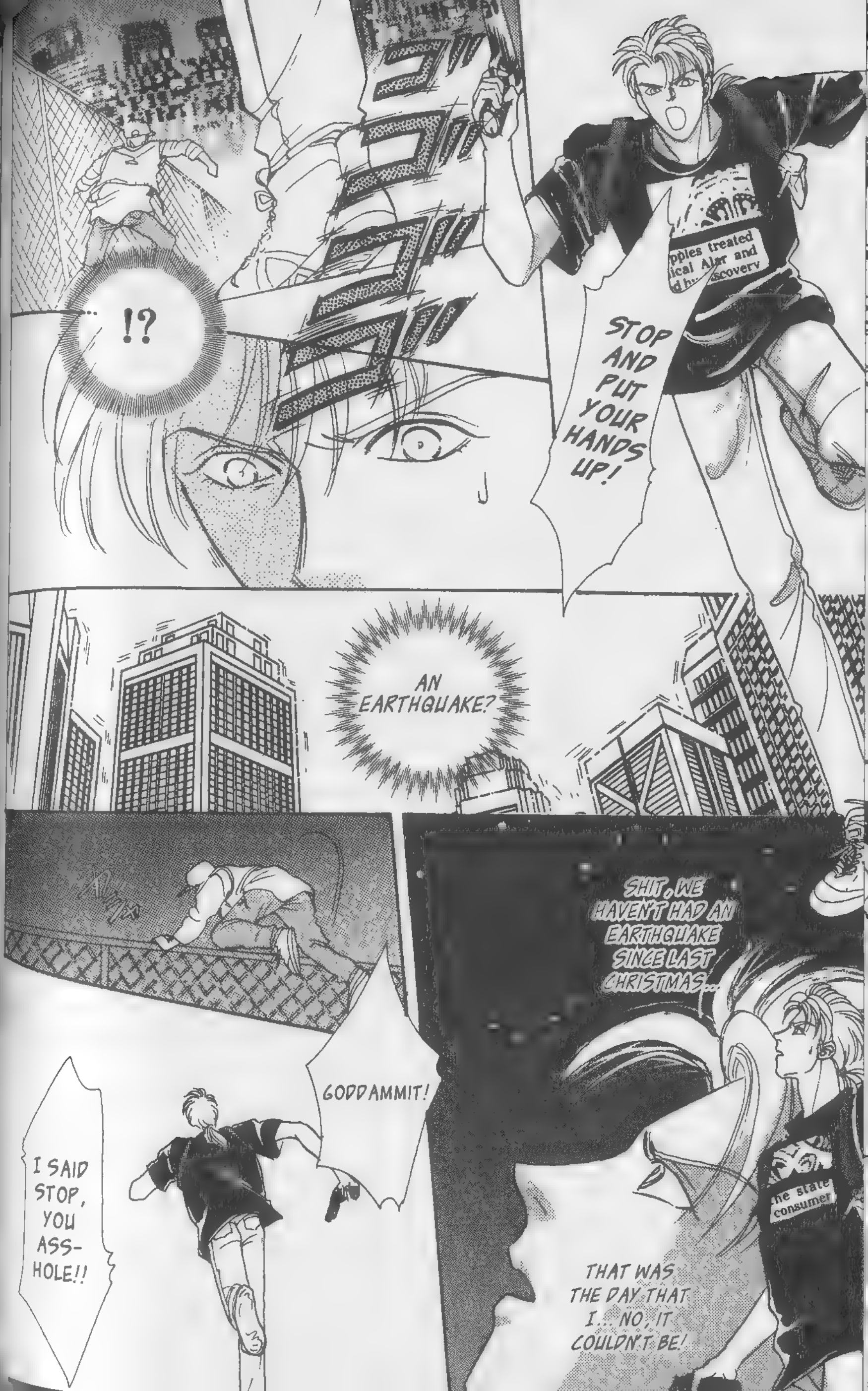
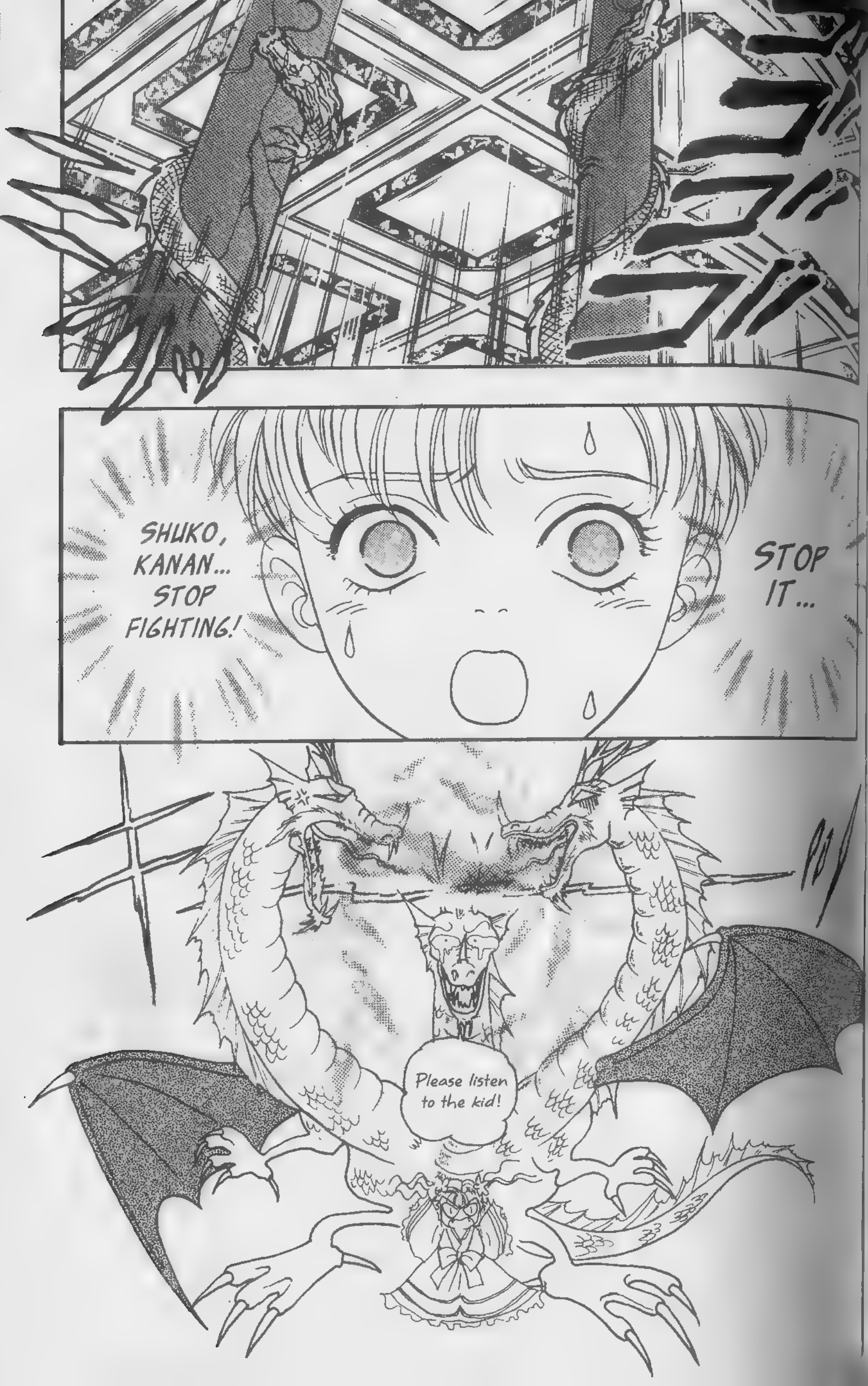
*GGGGRRRGGHHH...


THE COUNT IS RIGHT. THIS IS A PET SHOP.
WH-WHY?!
I LIKE IT HERE! ALL THE PETS LIKE ME. THIS IS THE BEST HOME THAT I'VE EVER HAD!
IT'S NOT A PLACE FOR HUMANS.
THIS ISN'T YOUR HOME, CHRIS.
SOMEDAY SOON, YOU WILL REGAIN YOUR ABILTY TO SPEAK AMONGST YOUR KIND.
THEN YOU WILL NO LONGER FIT IN WITH OUR WORLD.
THE LONGER YOU STAY WITH US, THE HARDER IT WILL BE TO LEAVE. AND THE DAY WILL COME WHEN YOU MUST LEAVE, CHRIS.
WAIT A MINUTE... COUNT?


!?
WHAT IS THAT?! AN EARTHQUAKE?!
KYU KYU KYU KYU!
WHAT?!
KYU KYU!
K-YU!
H...
HONLON?
HONLON? OH, NOT AGAIN!
SHUKO AND KANAN THIS TIME? THEY'RE... FIGHTING?!


A DRAGON.
WITH THREE HEADS.
IF THIS FIGHT GETS OUT OF HAND...
...THEY'LL LEVEL THIS ENTIRE CITY.
HEH... HAHAHA... YOU'RE JOKING!
DRAGONS DON'T EXIST. THIS IS JUST AN EARTHQUAKE.
OH GOD, CHRIS...
WHERE'S CHRIS?!
NO, MA'AM, YOU CAN'T GO BACK THERE!


ゴゴゴ
STOP AND PUT YOUR HANDS UP!
pples treated
ical Alar and
d by Discovery
...!?
AN EARTHQUAKE?
SHIT, WE HAVEN'T HAD AN EARTHQUAKE SINCE LAST CHRISTMAS...
the state consumer
THAT WAS THE DAY THAT I... NO, IT COULDN'T BE!
GODDAMMIT!
I SAID STOP, YOU ASS-HOLE!!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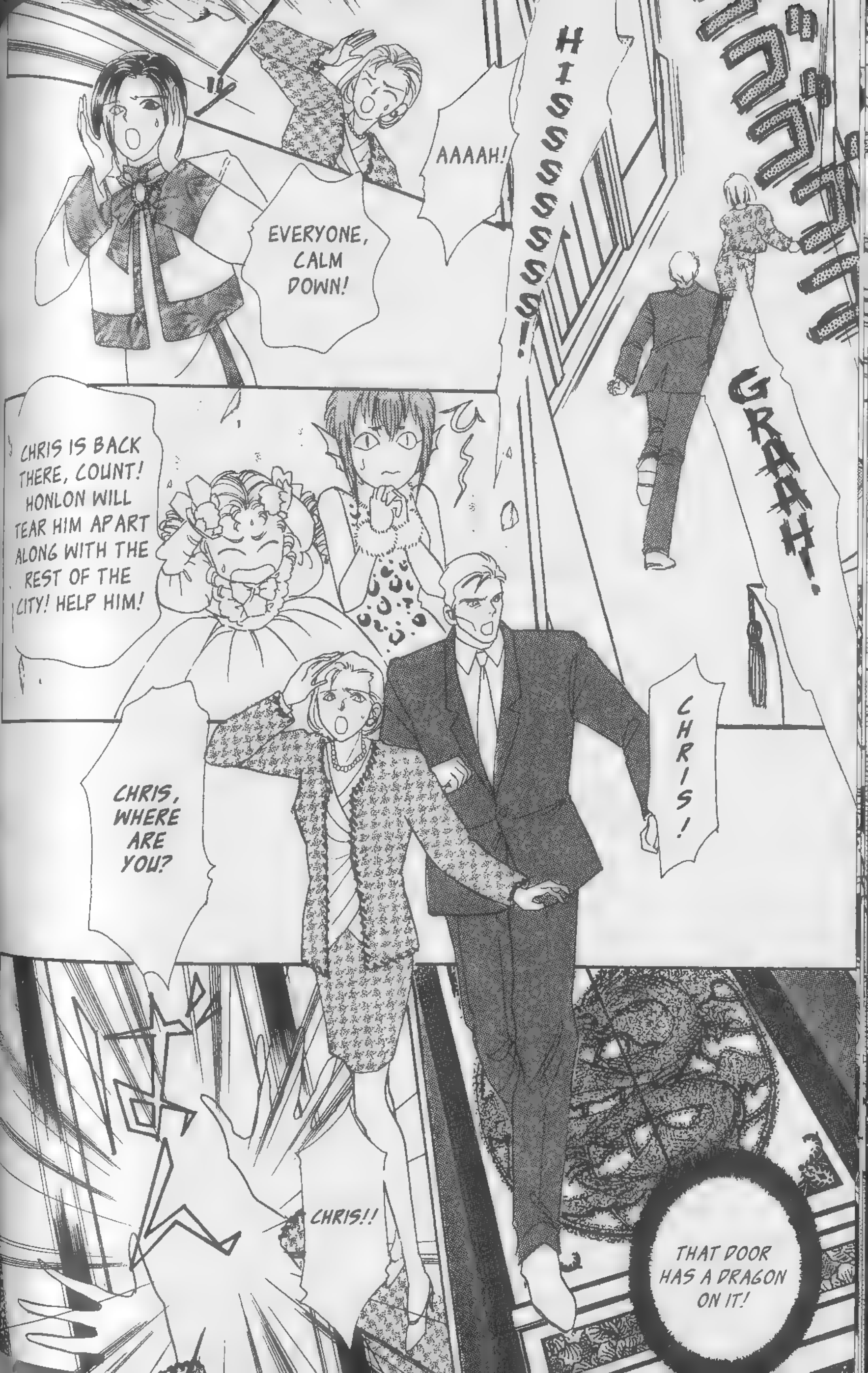
STOP IT...
SHUKO, KANAN... STOP FIGHTING!
Please listen to the kid!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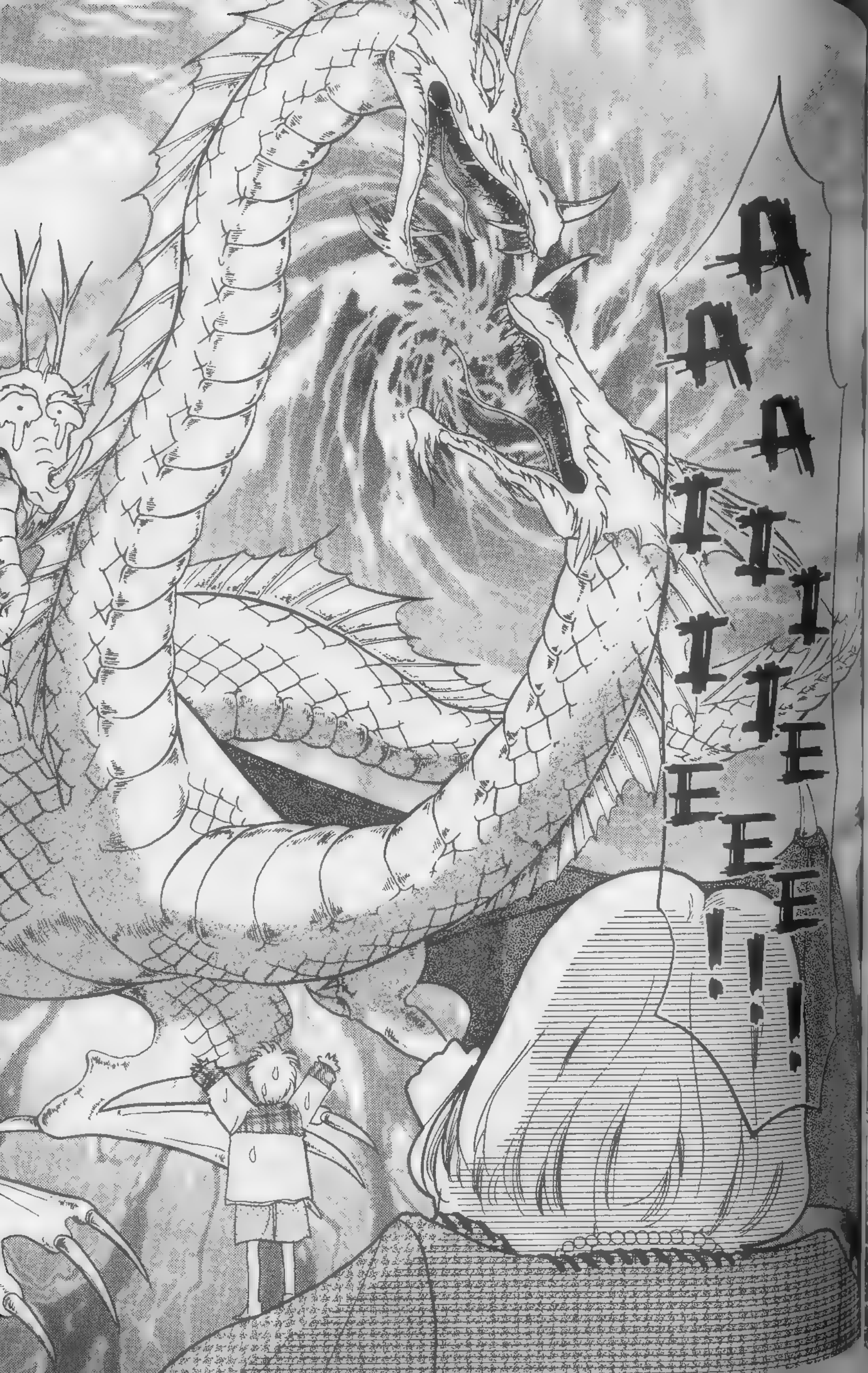
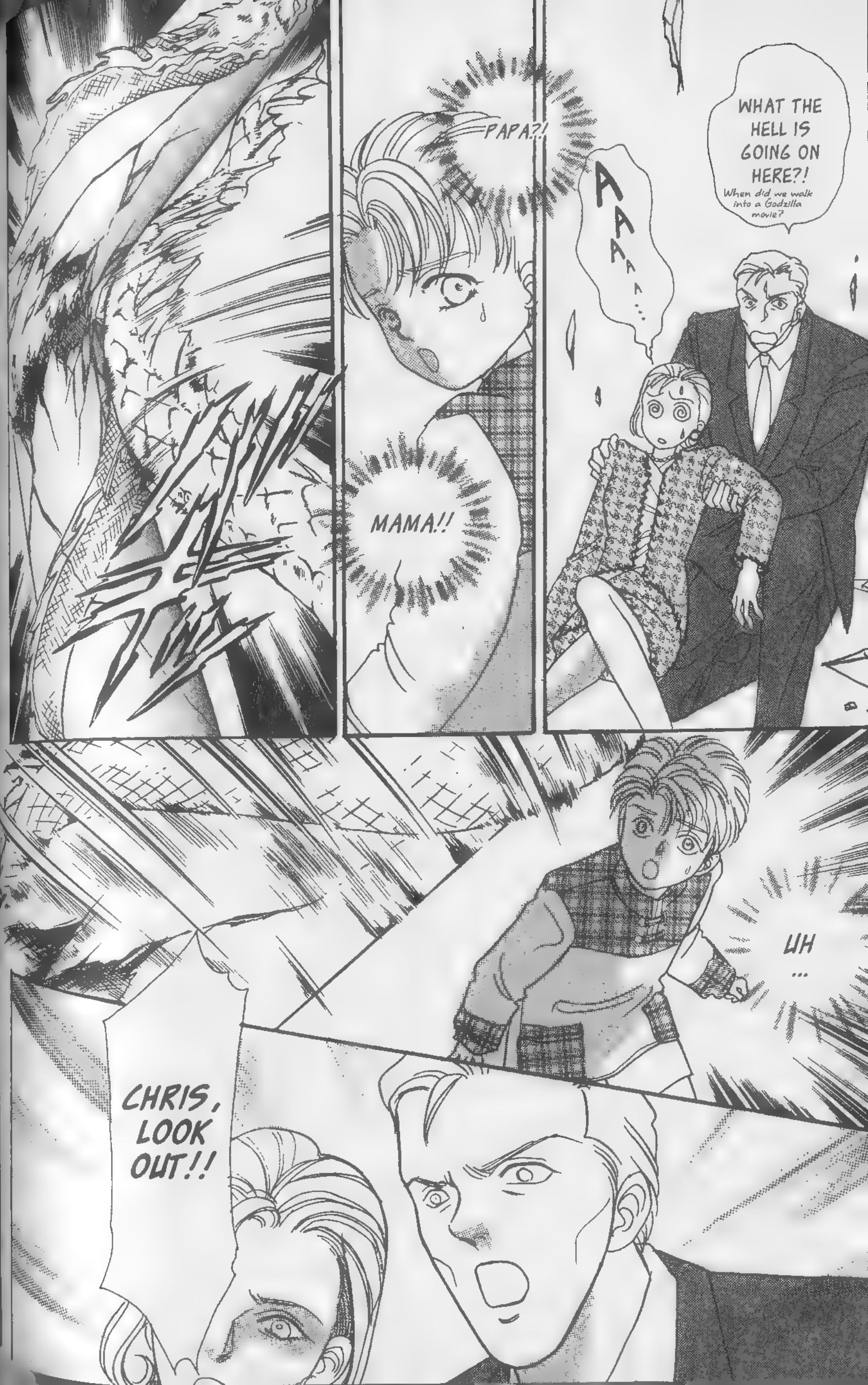
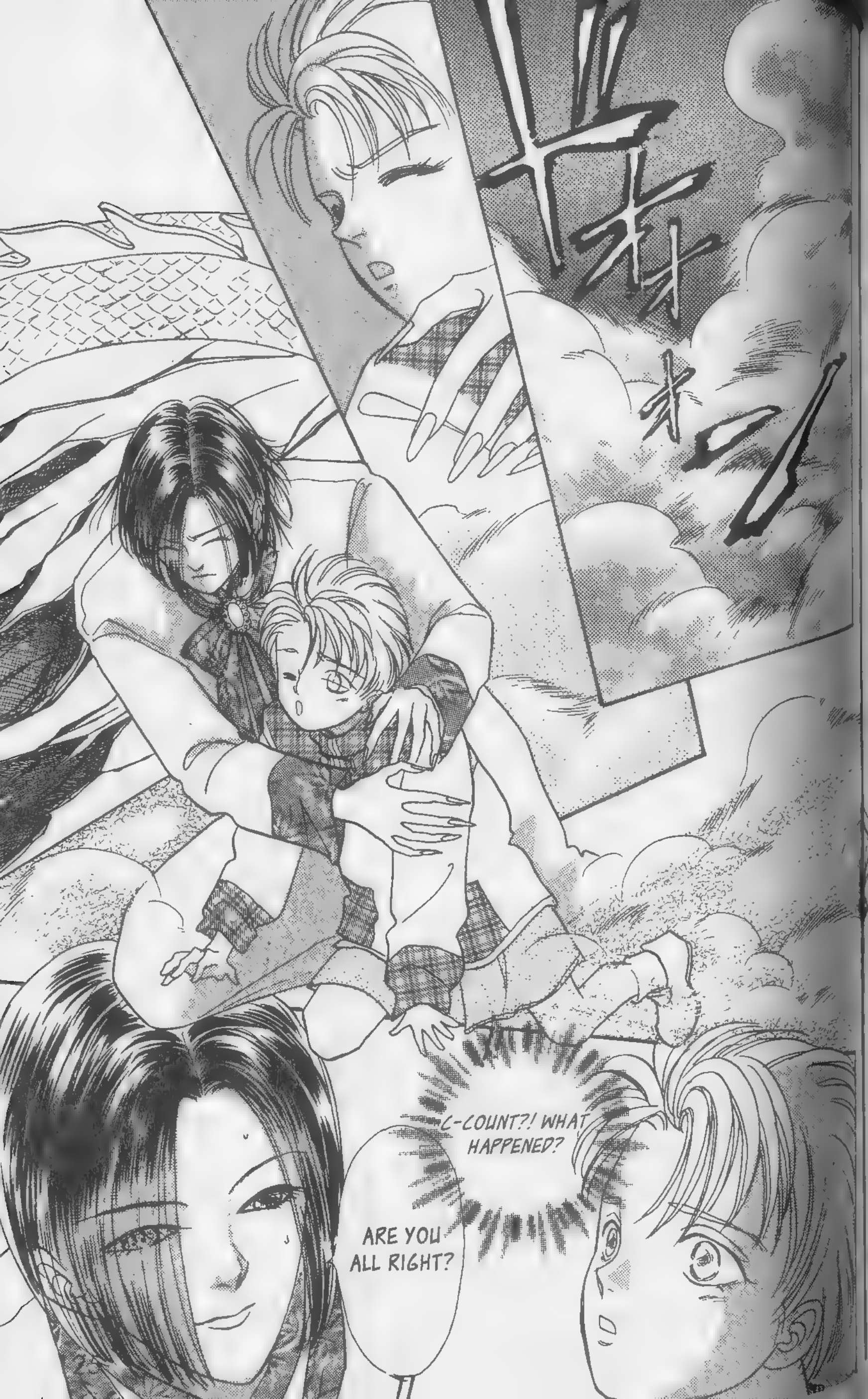
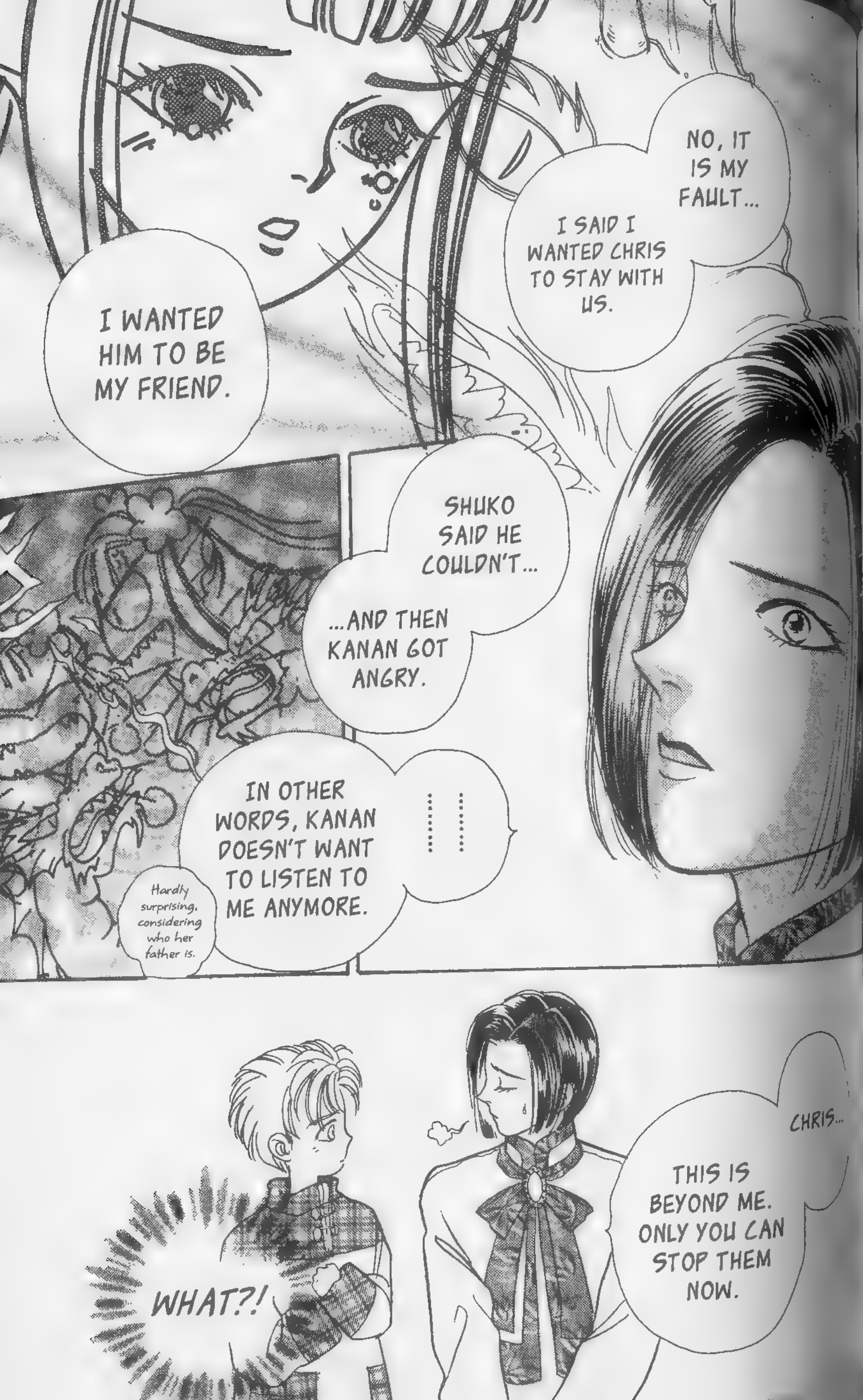
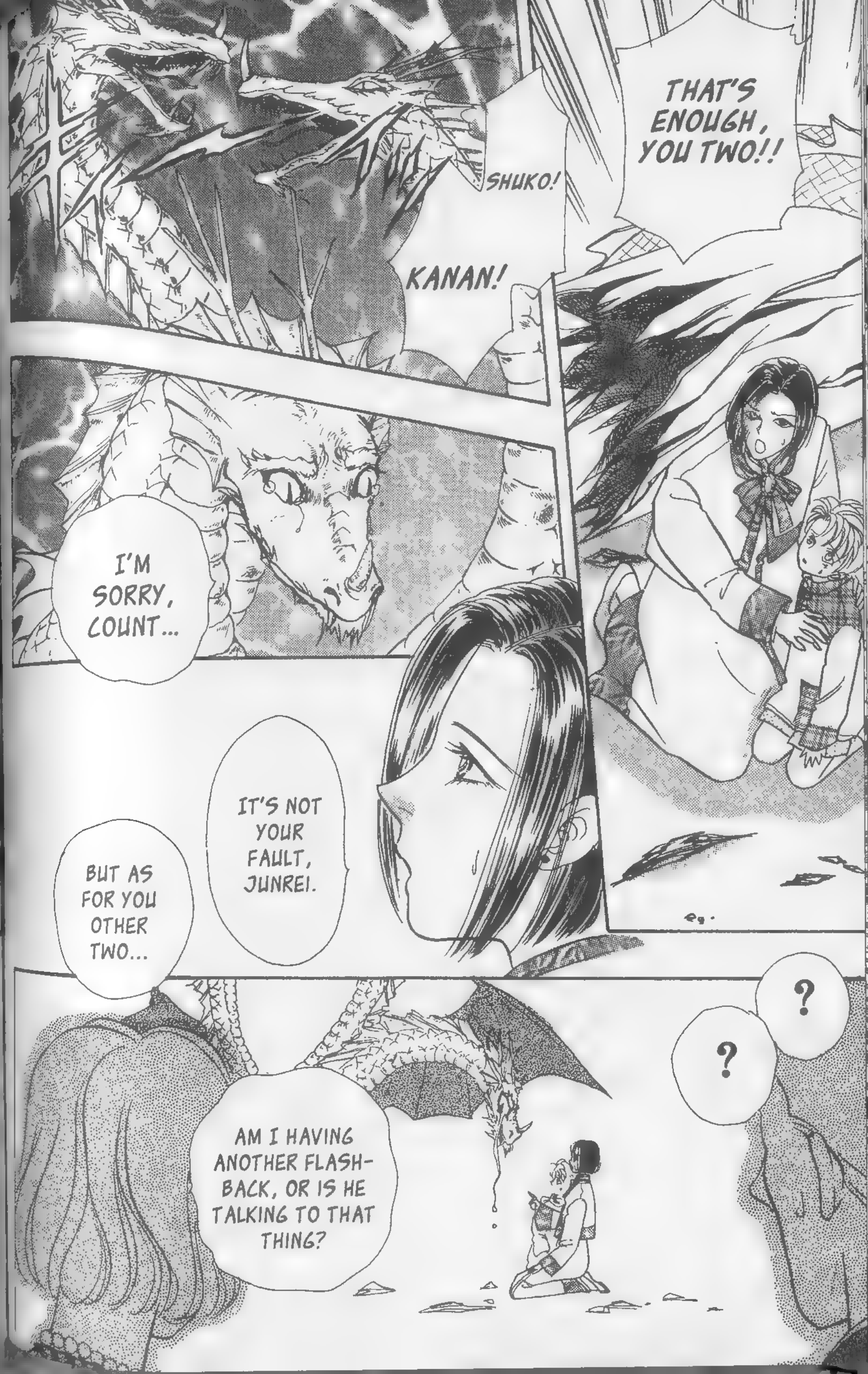
HISSSSSSSSS!
AAAAH!
EVERYONE, CALM DOWN!
GRAAH!
CHRIS!
CHRIS IS BACK THERE, COUNT! HONLON WILL TEAR HIM APART ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE CITY! HELP HIM!
CHRIS, WHERE ARE YOU?
CHRIS!!
THAT DOOR HAS A DRAGON ON IT!

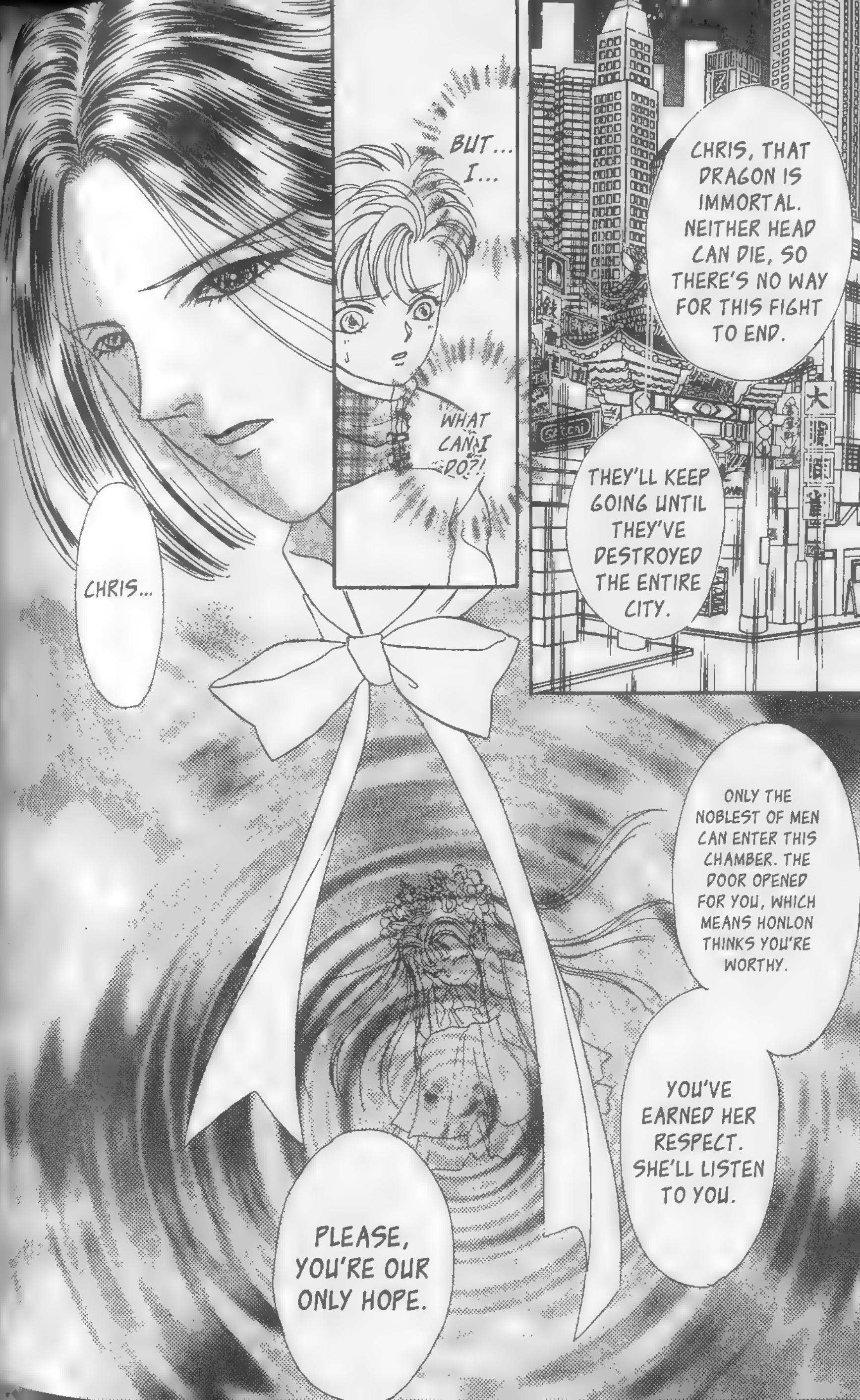

AAAAIIIIIEEEEE!!!

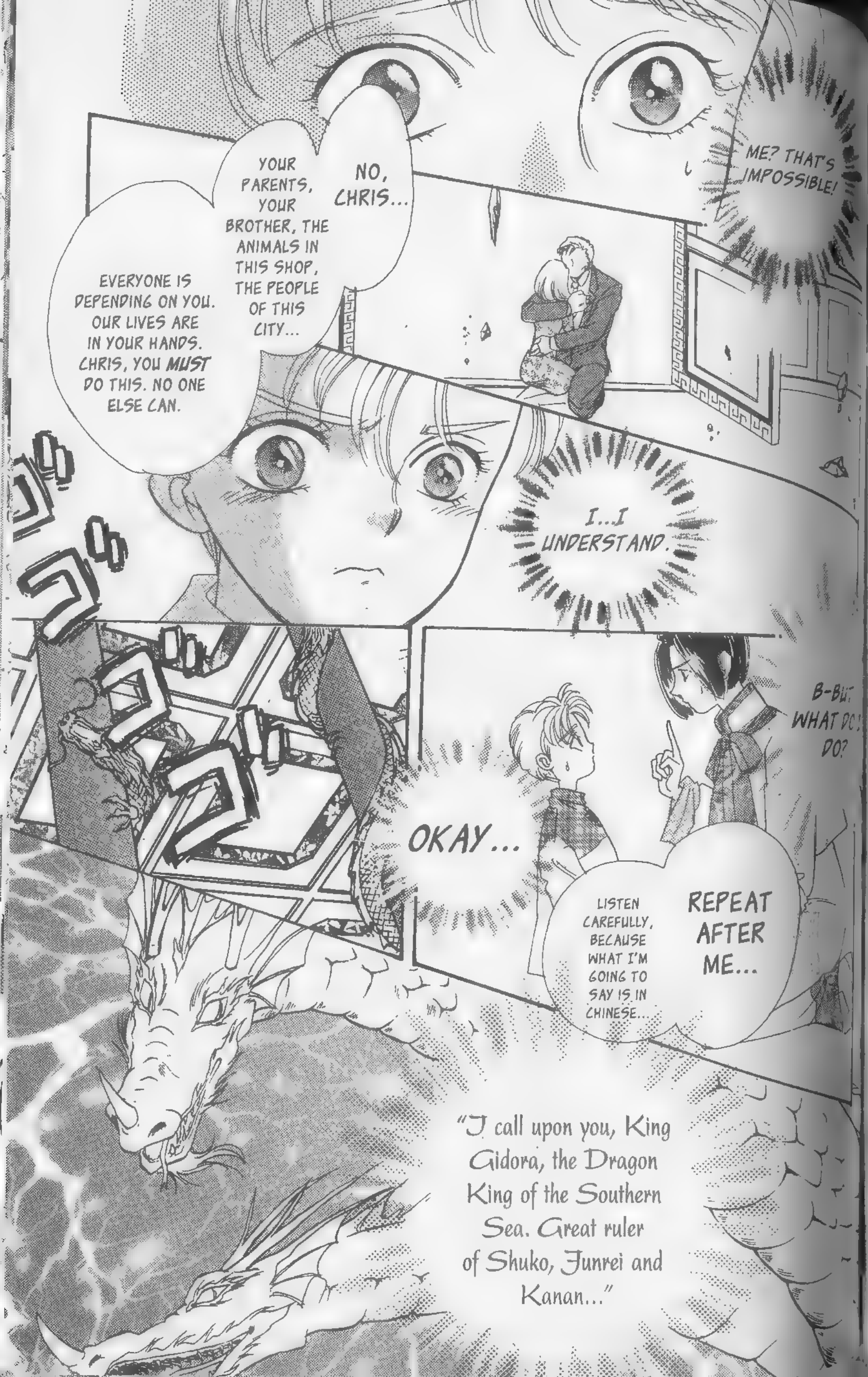

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!
When did we walk into a Godzilla movie?
AAAAA...
PAPA?!
MAMA!!
UH ...
CHRIS, LOOK OUT!!

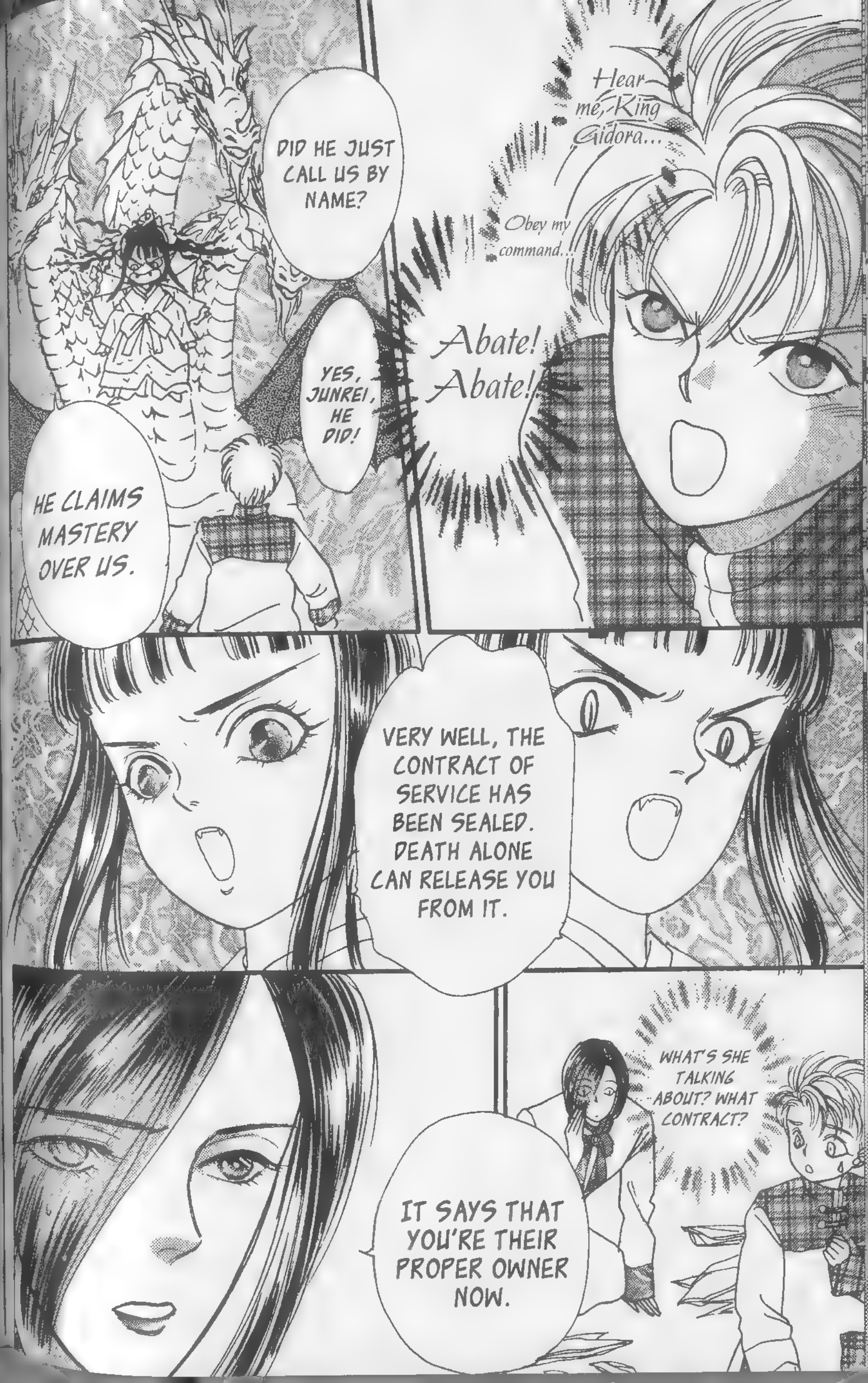

C-COUNT?! WHAT HAPPENED?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

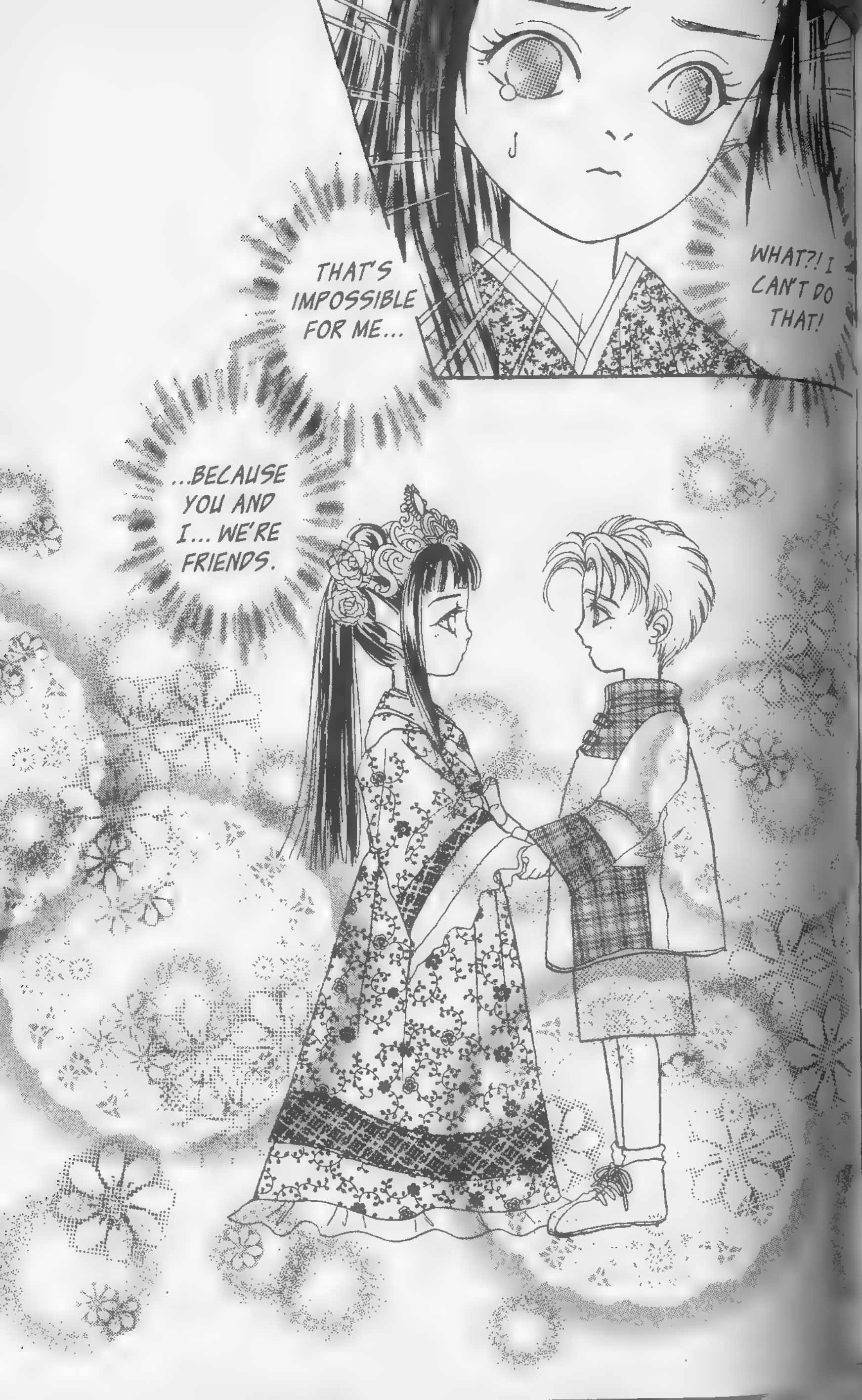

NO, IT IS MY FAULT...
I SAID I WANTED CHRIS TO STAY WITH US.
I WANTED HIM TO BE MY FRIEND.
SHUKO SAID HE COULDN'T...
...AND THEN KANAN GOT ANGRY.
......
IN OTHER WORDS, KANAN DOESN'T WANT TO LISTEN TO ME ANYMORE.
Hardly surprising, considering who her father is.
CHRIS...
THIS IS BEYOND ME. ONLY YOU CAN STOP THEM NOW.
WHAT?!

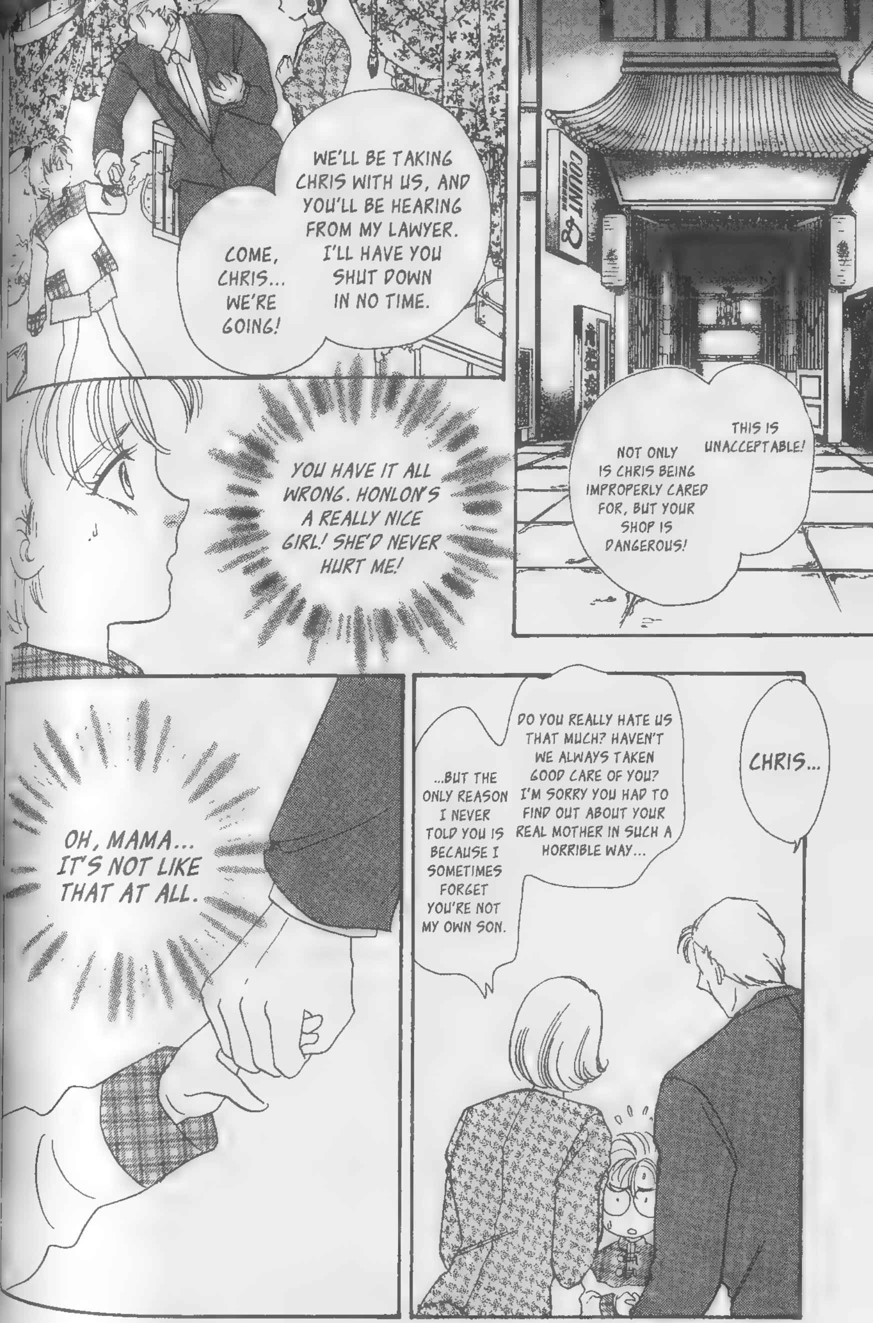

THAT'S ENOUGH, YOU TWO!!
SHUKO!
KANAN!
I'M SORRY, COUNT...
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, JUNREI.
BUT AS FOR YOU OTHER TWO...
?
?
AM I HAVING ANOTHER FLASH-BACK, OR IS HE TALKING TO THAT THING?

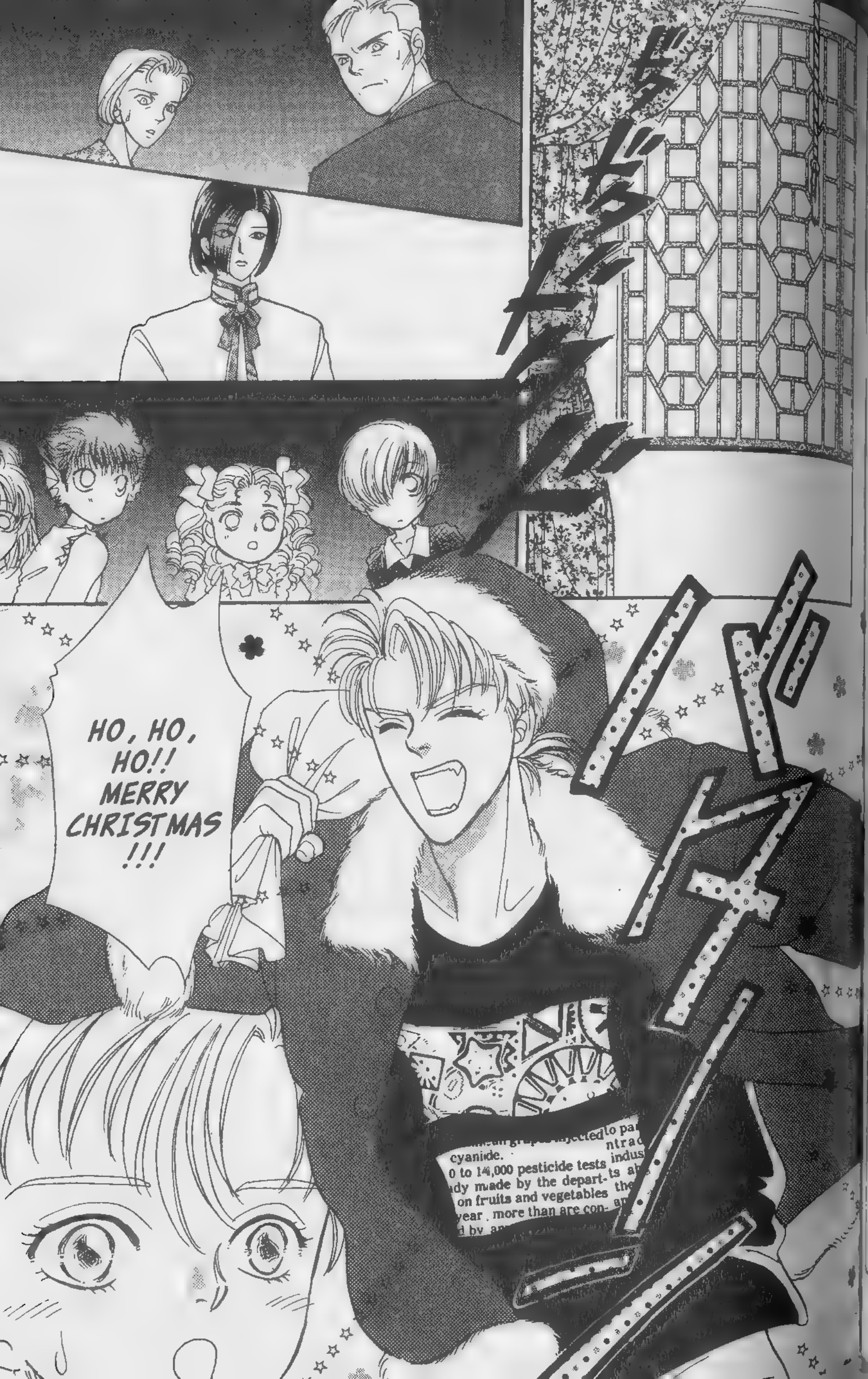

CHRIS, THAT DRAGON IS IMMORTAL. NEITHER HEAD CAN DIE, SO THERE'S NO WAY FOR THIS FIGHT TO END.
THEY'LL KEEP GOING UNTIL THEY'VE DESTROYED THE ENTIRE CITY.
BUT... I...
WHAT CAN I DO?!
CHRIS...
ONLY THE NOBLEST OF MEN CAN ENTER THIS CHAMBER. THE DOOR OPENED FOR YOU, WHICH MEANS HONLON THINKS YOU'RE WORTHY.
YOU'VE EARNED HER RESPECT. SHE'LL LISTEN TO YOU.
PLEASE, YOU'RE OUR ONLY HOPE.

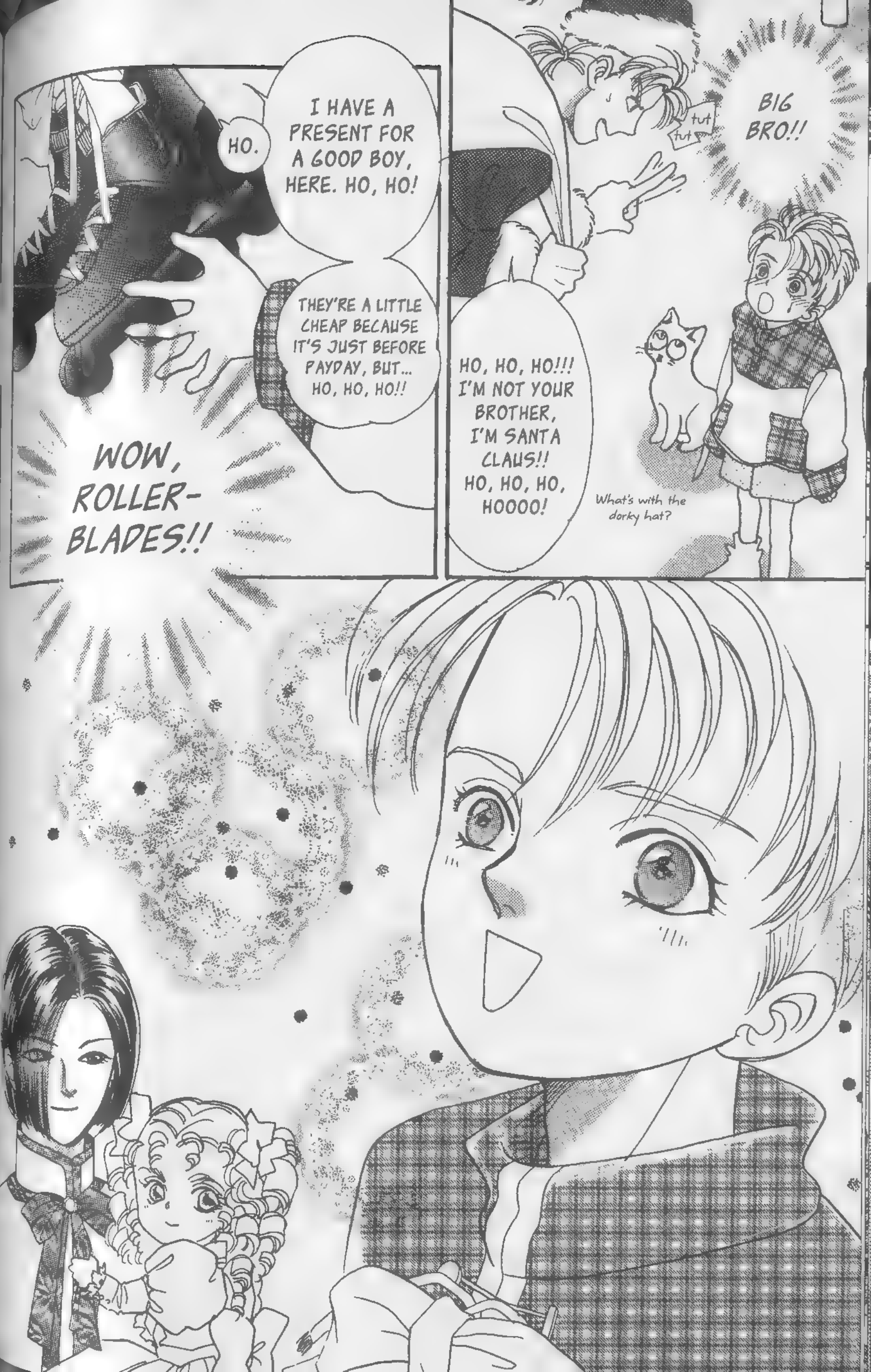

ME? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
NO, CHRIS...
YOUR PARENTS, YOUR BROTHER, THE ANIMALS IN THIS SHOP, THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY...
EVERYONE IS DEPENDING ON YOU. OUR LIVES ARE IN YOUR HANDS. CHRIS, YOU MUST DO THIS. NO ONE ELSE CAN.
I..I UNDERSTAND.
B-BUT WHAT DO I DO?
REPEAT AFTER ME...
LISTEN CAREFULLY, BECAUSE WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY IS IN CHINESE...
OKAY...
"I call upon you, King Gidora, the Dragon King of the Southern Sea. Great ruler of Shuko, Junrei and Kanan..."

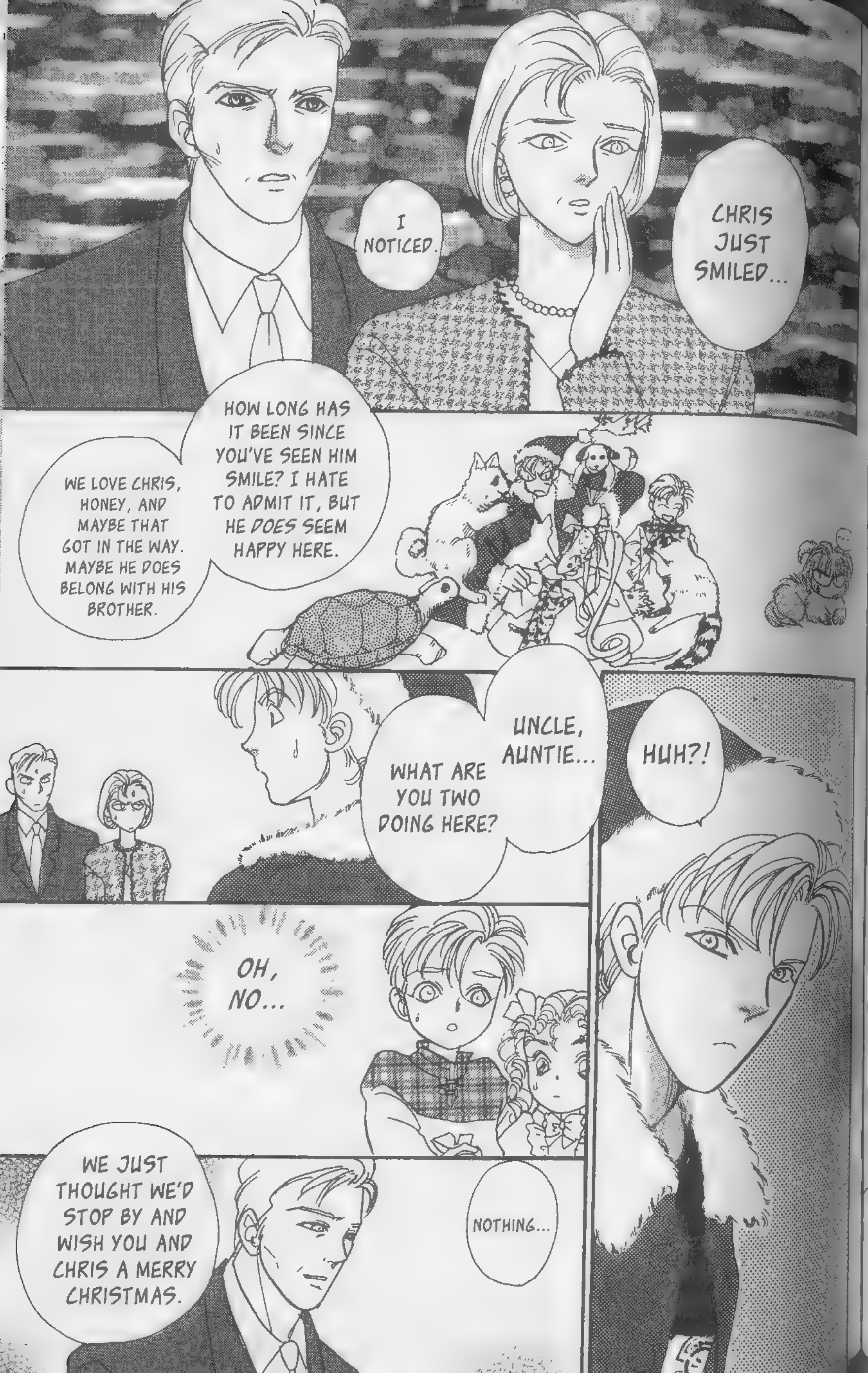

Hear me, King Gidora...
Obey my command...
Abate! Abate!
DID HE JUST CALL US BY NAME?
YES, JUNREI, HE DID!
HE CLAIMS MASTERY OVER US.
VERY WELL, THE CONTRACT OF SERVICE HAS BEEN SEALED. DEATH ALONE CAN RELEASE YOU FROM IT.
WHAT'S SHE TALKING ABOUT? WHAT CONTRACT?
IT SAYS THAT YOU'RE THEIR PROPER OWNER NOW.

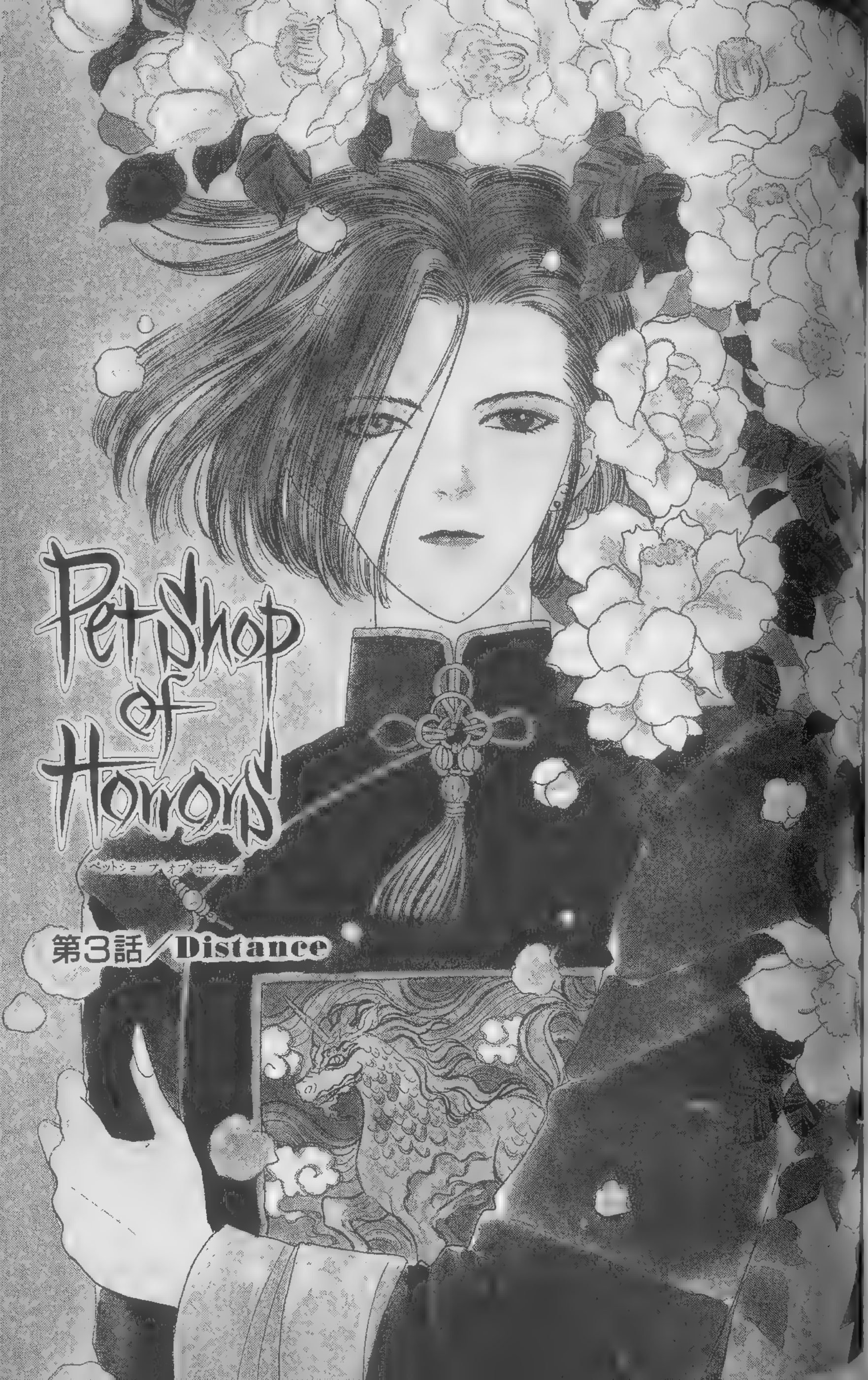

WHAT?! I CAN'T DO THAT!
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME...
...BECAUSE YOU AND I... WE'RE FRIENDS.


THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE!
NOT ONLY IS CHRIS BEING IMPROPERLY CARED FOR, BUT YOUR SHOP IS DANGEROUS!
WE'LL BE TAKING CHRIS WITH US, AND YOU'LL BE HEARING FROM MY LAWYER. I'LL HAVE YOU SHUT DOWN IN NO TIME.
COME, CHRIS... WE'RE GOING!
YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG. HONLON'S A REALLY NICE GIRL! SHE'D NEVER HURT ME!
CHRIS...
DO YOU REALLY HATE US THAT MUCH? HAVEN'T WE ALWAYS TAKEN GOOD CARE OF YOU? I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR REAL MOTHER IN SUCH A HORRIBLE WAY...
...BUT THE ONLY REASON I NEVER TOLD YOU IS BECAUSE I SOMETIMES FORGET YOU'RE NOT MY OWN SON.
OH, MAMA... IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL.
COUNT D

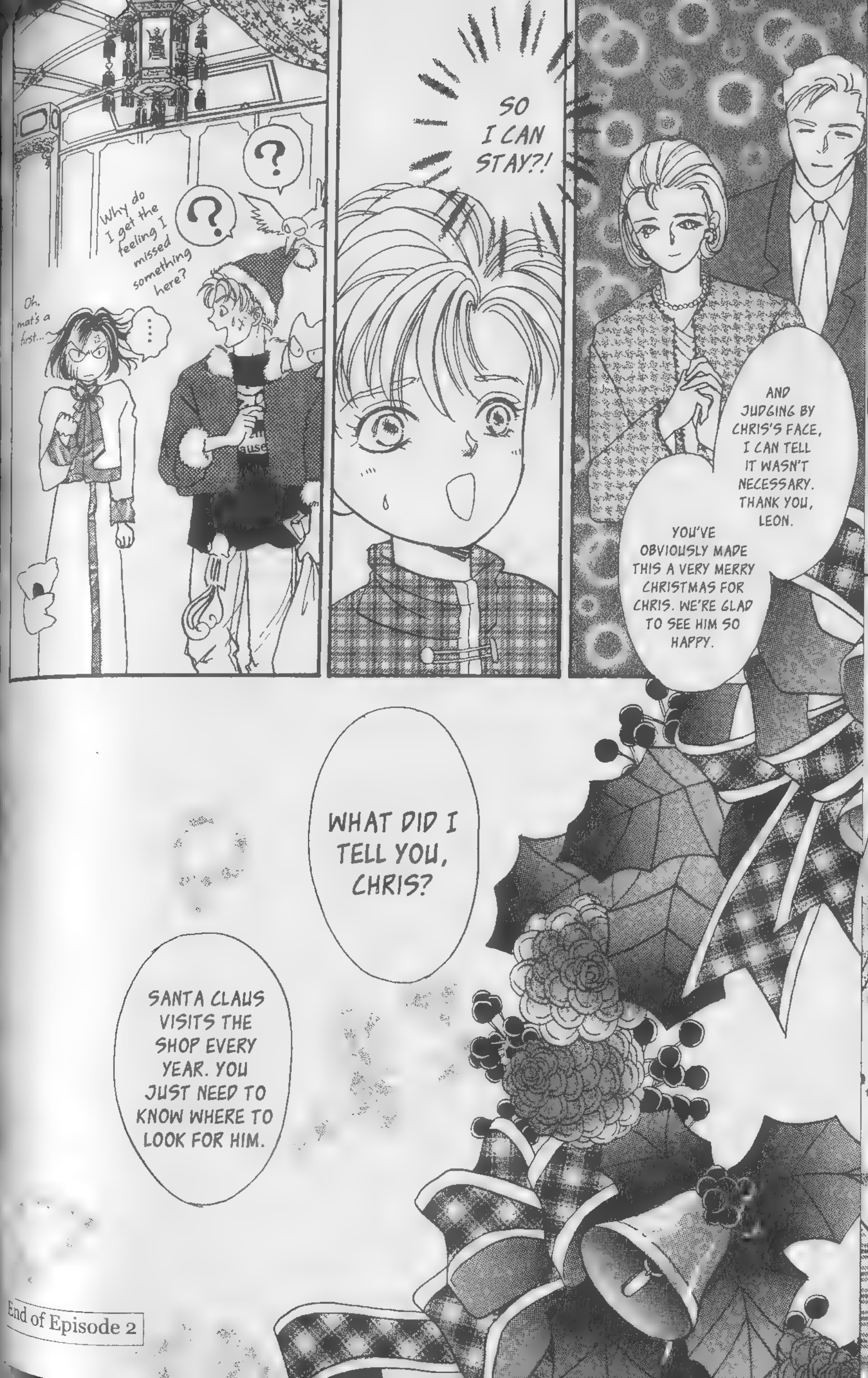

HO, HO, HO!! MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!


BIG BRO!!
tut tut
HO, HO, HO!!! I'M NOT YOUR BROTHER, I'M SANTA CLAUS!! HO, HO, HO, HOOOO!
What's with the dorky hat?
I HAVE A PRESENT FOR A GOOD BOY, HERE. HO, HO!
HO.
THEY'RE A LITTLE CHEAP BECAUSE IT'S JUST BEFORE PAYDAY, BUT... HO, HO, HO!!
WOW, ROLLER-BLADES!!

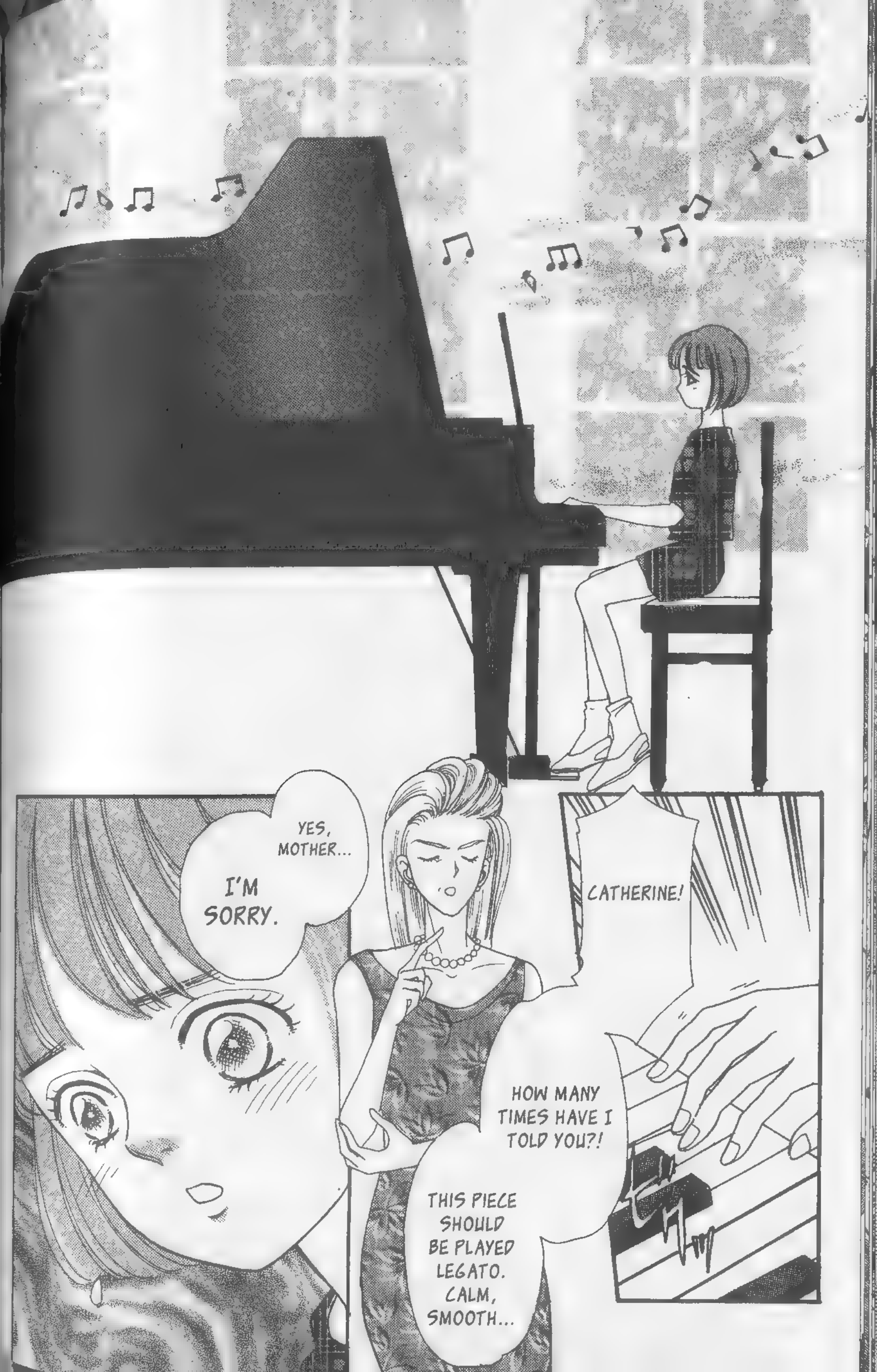

CHRIS JUST SMILED...
I NOTICED.
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU'VE SEEN HIM SMILE? I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT HE DOES SEEM HAPPY HERE.
WE LOVE CHRIS, HONEY, AND MAYBE THAT GOT IN THE WAY. MAYBE HE DOES BELONG WITH HIS BROTHER.
UNCLE, AUNTIE...
WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING HERE?
HUH?!
OH, NO...
NOTHING...
WE JUST THOUGHT WE'D STOP BY AND WISH YOU AND CHRIS A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

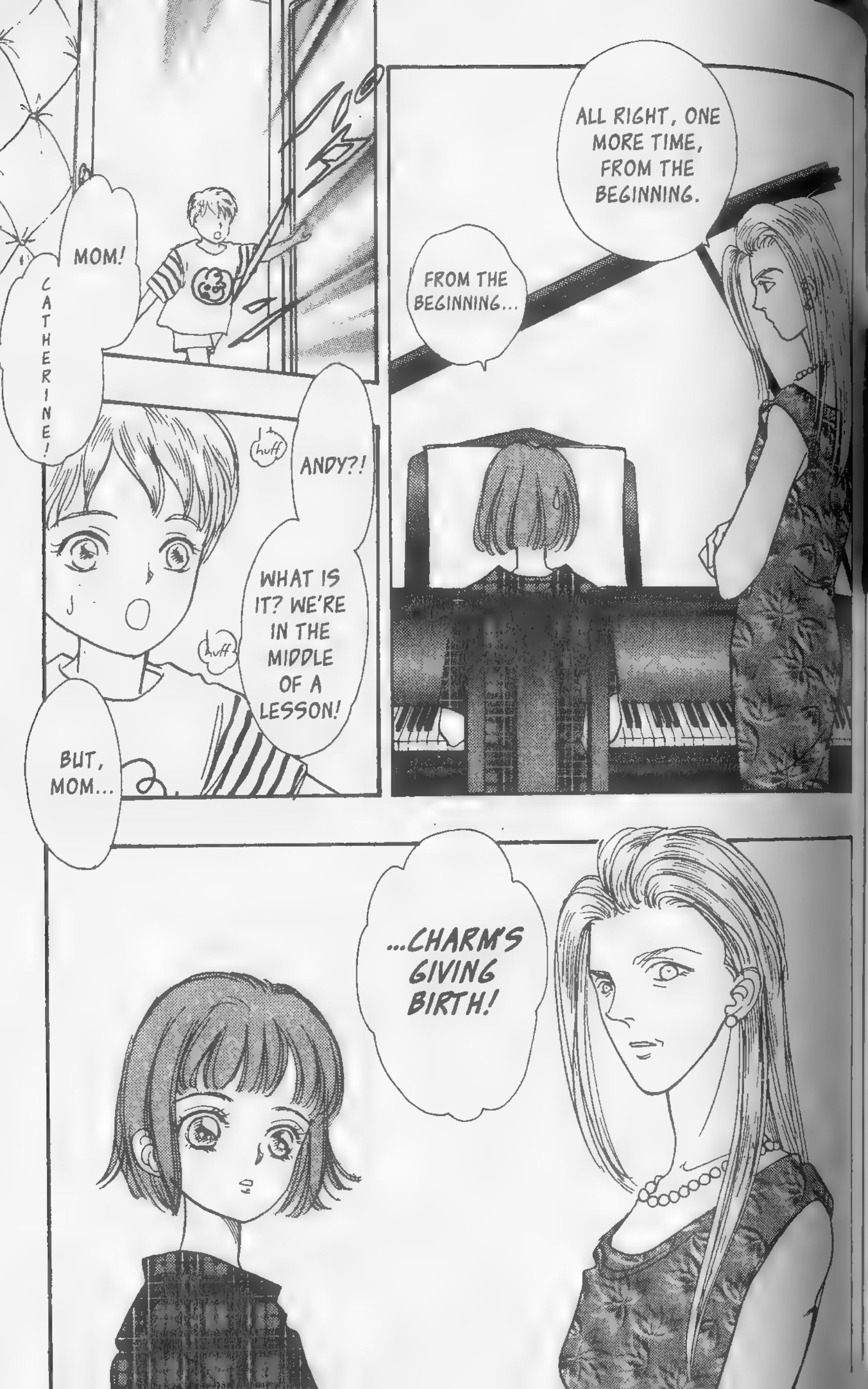

Pet Shop of Horrors
ペットショップオブホラーズ

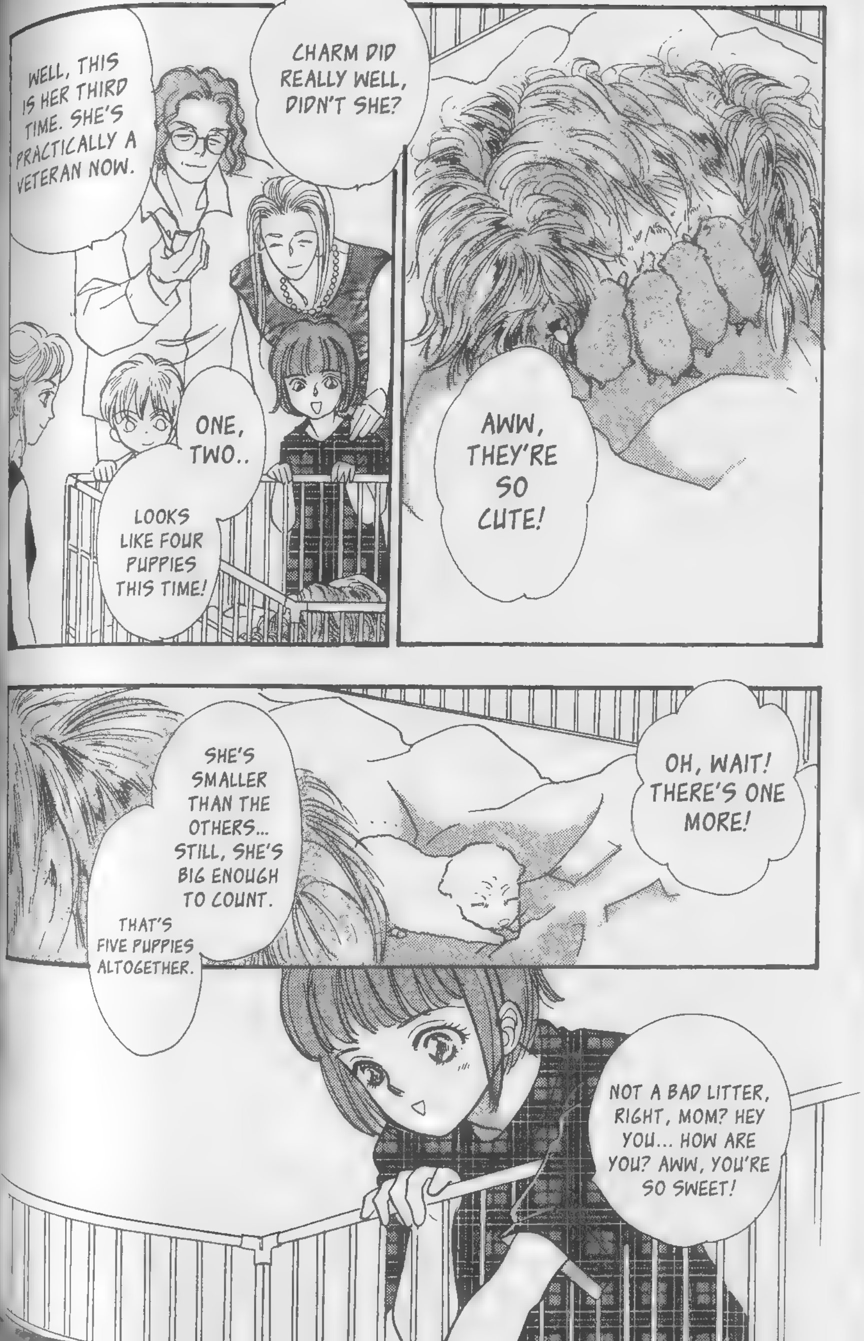
第3話／Distance

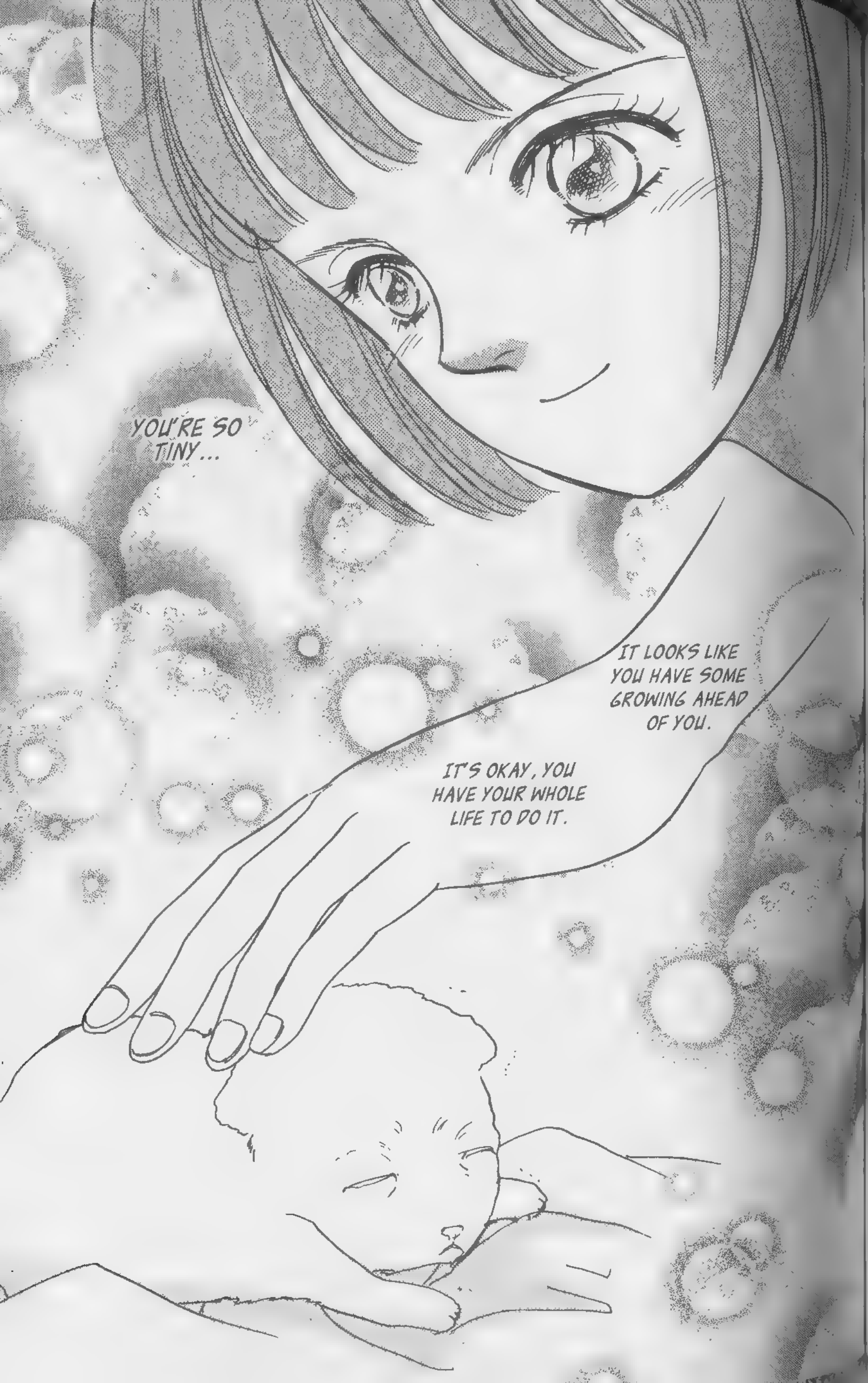

AND JUDGING BY CHRIS'S FACE, I CAN TELL IT WASN'T NECESSARY. THANK YOU, LEON.
YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY MADE THIS A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS FOR CHRIS. WE'RE GLAD TO SEE HIM SO HAPPY.
SO I CAN STAY?!
?
?
Why do I get the feeling I missed something here?
...
Oh, that's a first...
WHAT DID I TELL YOU, CHRIS?
SANTA CLAUS VISITS THE SHOP EVERY YEAR. YOU JUST NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FOR HIM.

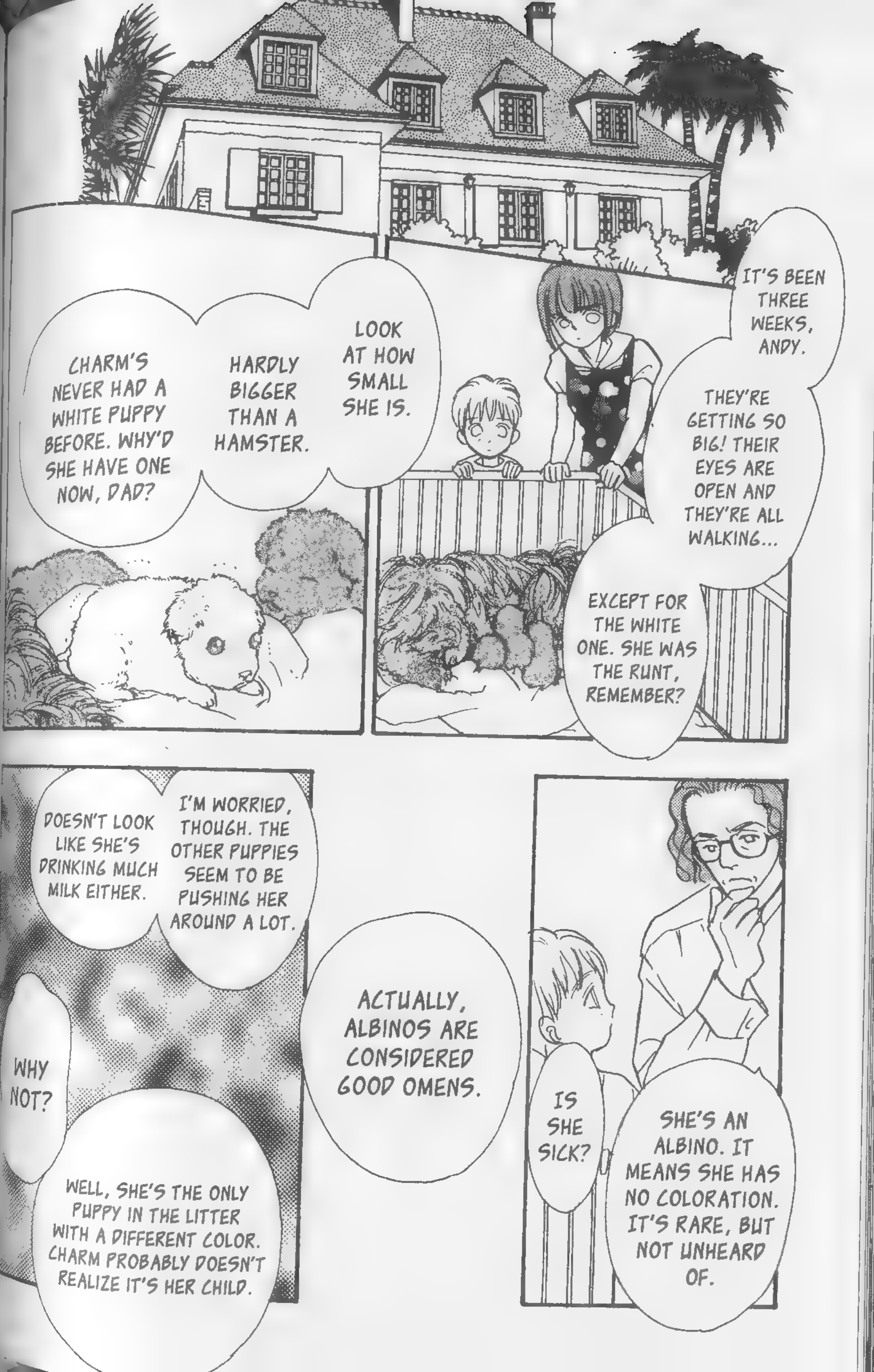
End of Episode 2

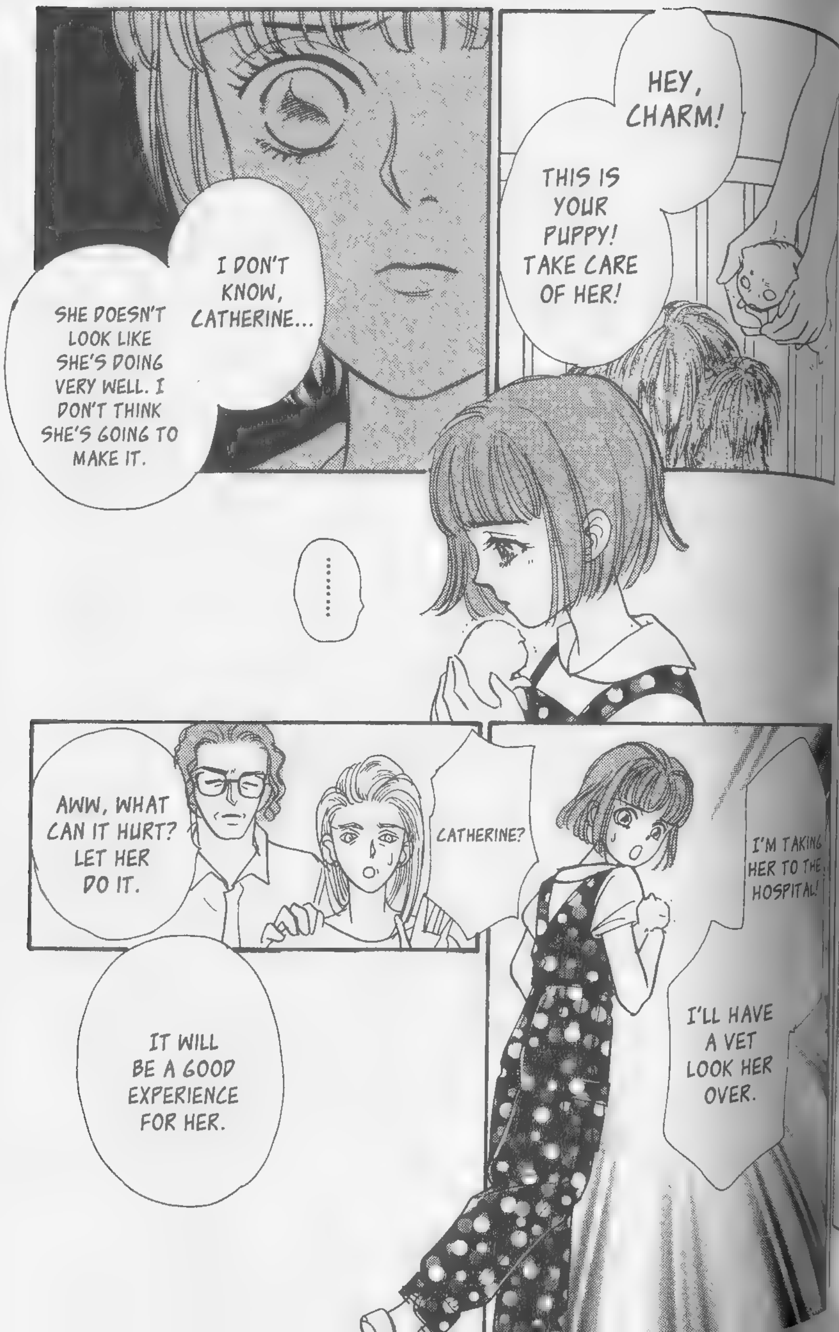

CATHERINE!
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU?!
THIS PIECE SHOULD BE PLAYED LEGATO. CALM, SMOOTH...
YES, MOTHER...
I'M SORRY.

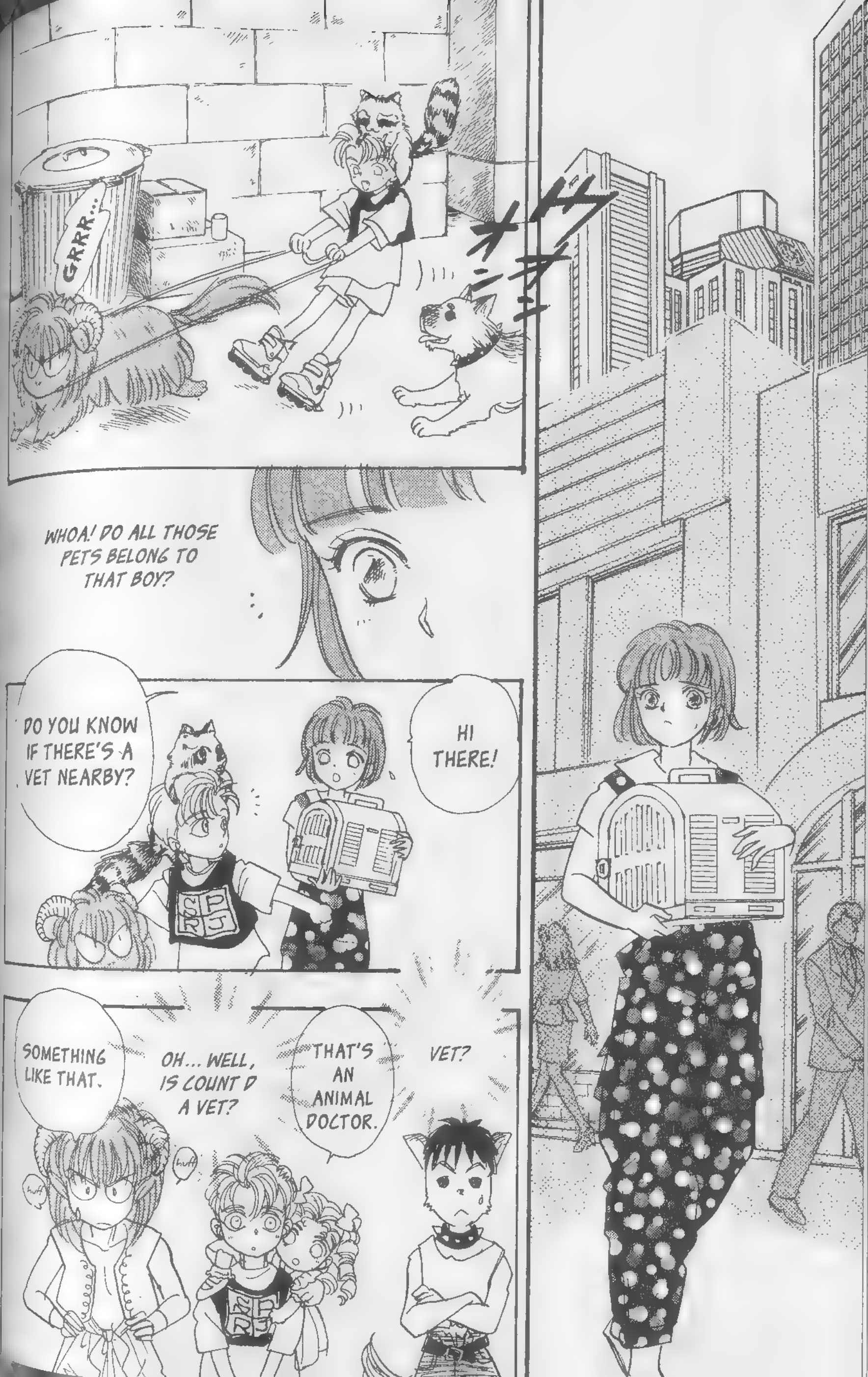

ALL RIGHT, ONE MORE TIME, FROM THE BEGINNING.
FROM THE BEGINNING...
MOM!
CATHERINE!
huff
huff
ANDY?!
WHAT IS IT? WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A LESSON!
BUT, MOM...
...CHARM'S GIVING BIRTH!

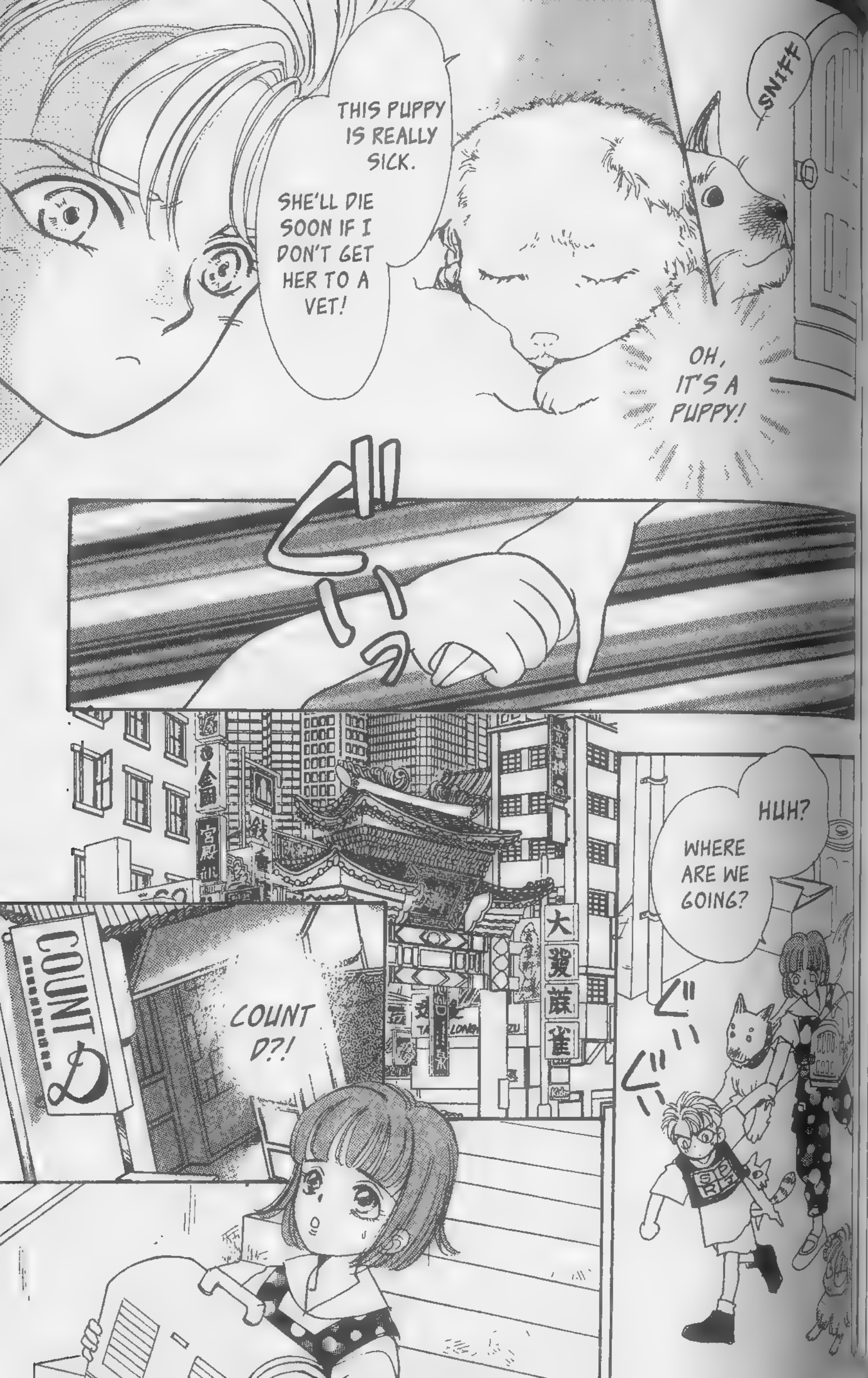

AWW, THEY'RE SO CUTE!
CHARM DID REALLY WELL, DIDN'T SHE?
WELL, THIS IS HER THIRD TIME. SHE'S PRACTICALLY A VETERAN NOW.
ONE, TWO..
LOOKS LIKE FOUR PUPPIES THIS TIME!
OH, WAIT! THERE'S ONE MORE!
SHE'S SMALLER THAN THE OTHERS... STILL, SHE'S BIG ENOUGH TO COUNT.
THAT'S FIVE PUPPIES ALTOGETHER.
NOT A BAD LITTER, RIGHT, MOM? HEY YOU... HOW ARE YOU? AWW, YOU'RE SO SWEET!

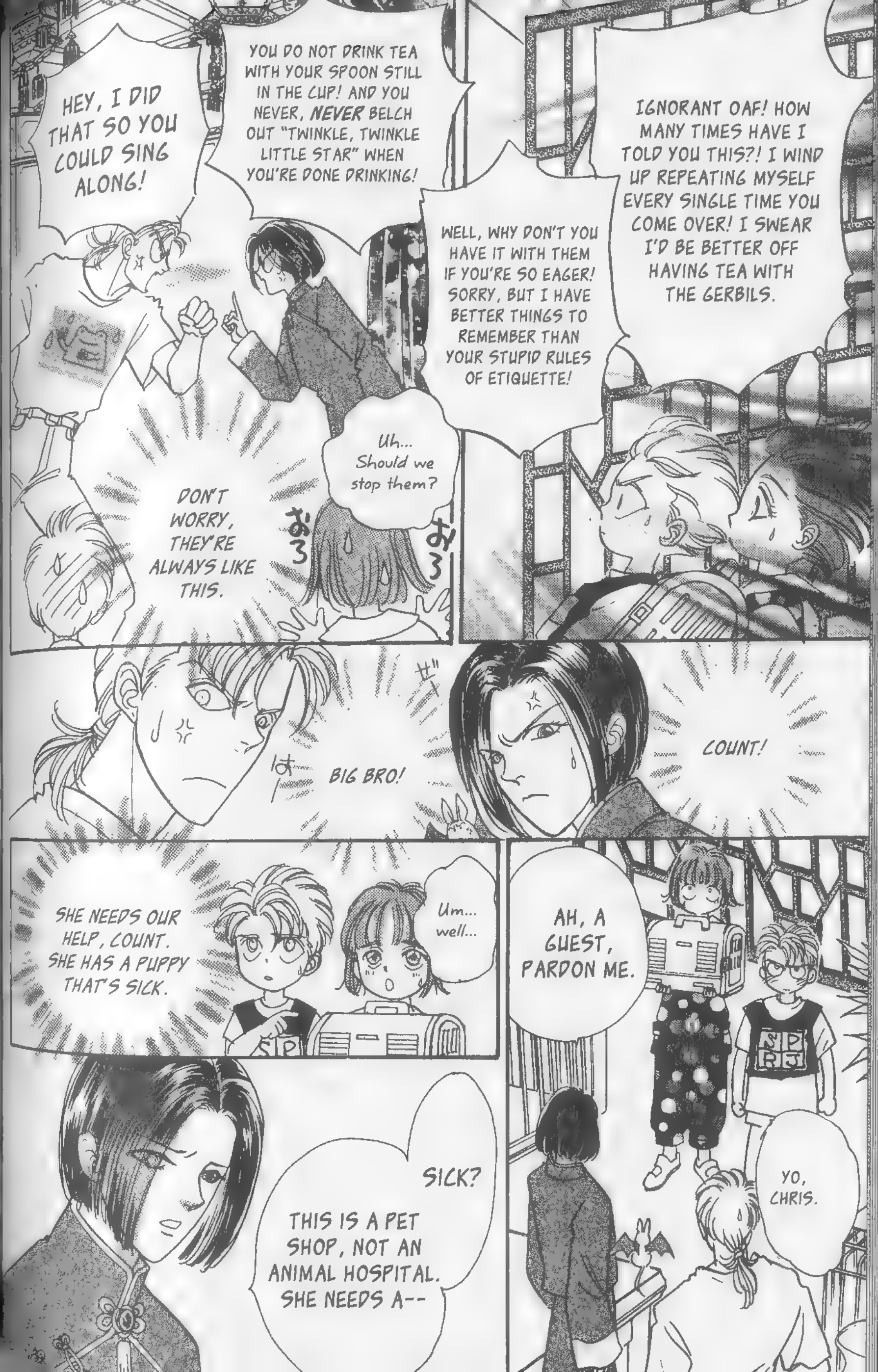
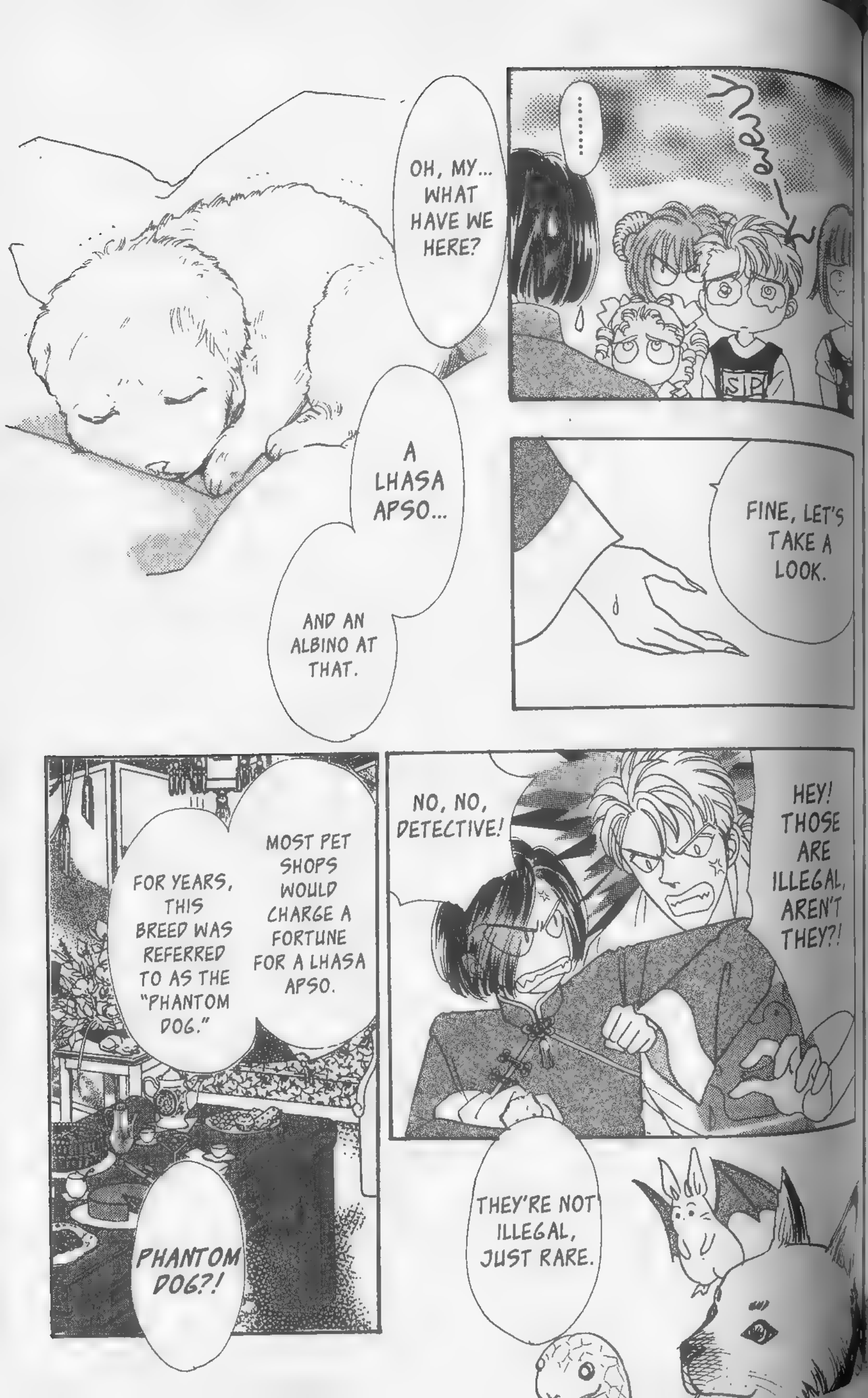

YOU'RE SO TINY...
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE SOME GROWING AHEAD OF YOU.
IT'S OKAY, YOU HAVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE TO DO IT.

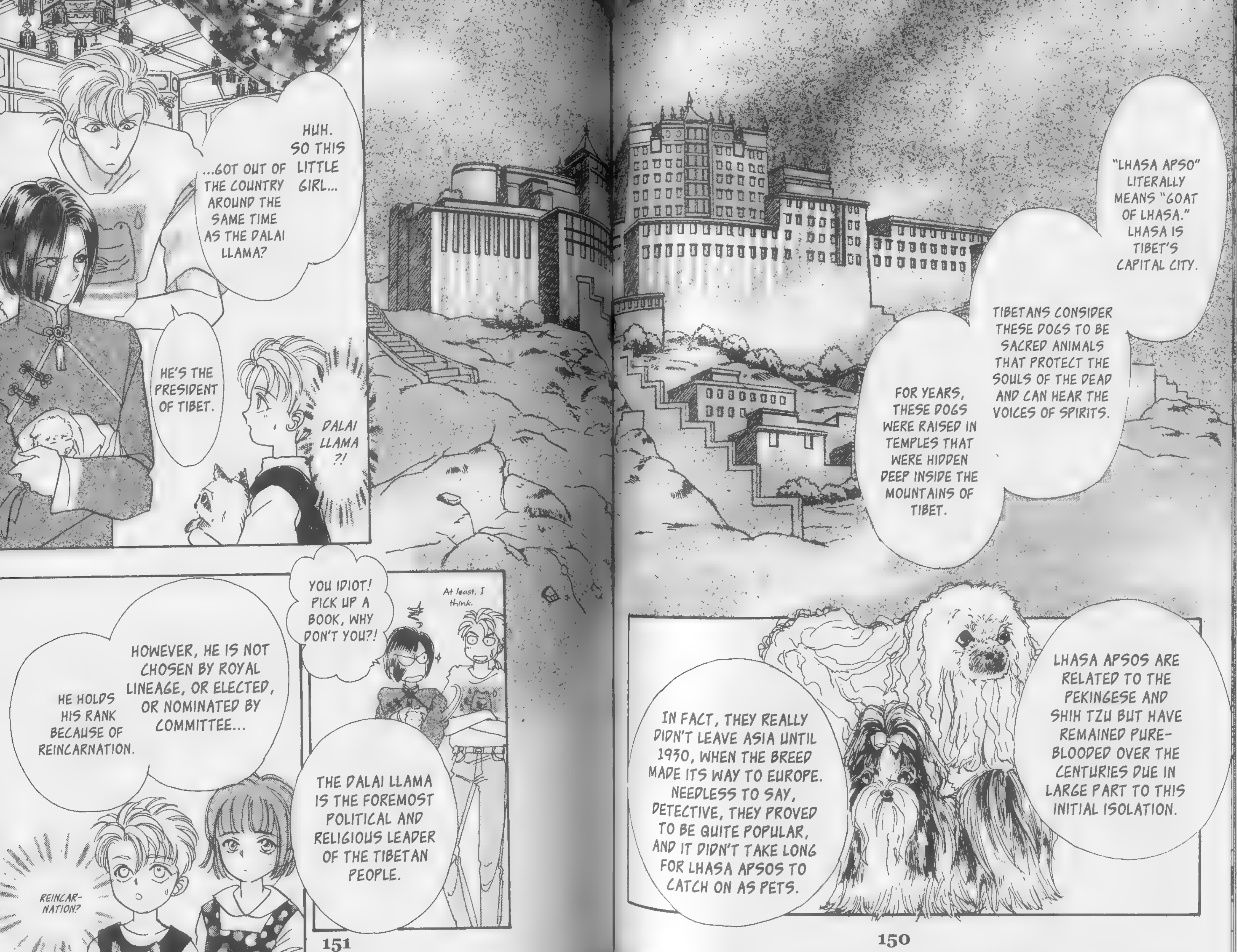

IT'S BEEN THREE WEEKS, ANDY.
THEY'RE GETTING SO BIG! THEIR EYES ARE OPEN AND THEY'RE ALL WALKING...
EXCEPT FOR THE WHITE ONE. SHE WAS THE RUNT, REMEMBER?
LOOK AT HOW SMALL SHE IS.
HARDLY BIGGER THAN A HAMSTER.
CHARM'S NEVER HAD A WHITE PUPPY BEFORE. WHY'D SHE HAVE ONE NOW, DAD?
SHE'S AN ALBINO. IT MEANS SHE HAS NO COLORATION. IT'S RARE, BUT NOT UNHEARD OF.
IS SHE SICK?
ACTUALLY, ALBINOS ARE CONSIDERED GOOD OMENS.
I'M WORRIED, THOUGH. THE OTHER PUPPIES SEEM TO BE PUSHING HER AROUND A LOT.
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE SHE'S DRINKING MUCH MILK EITHER.
WHY NOT?
WELL, SHE'S THE ONLY PUPPY IN THE LITTER WITH A DIFFERENT COLOR. CHARM PROBABLY DOESN'T REALIZE IT'S HER CHILD.

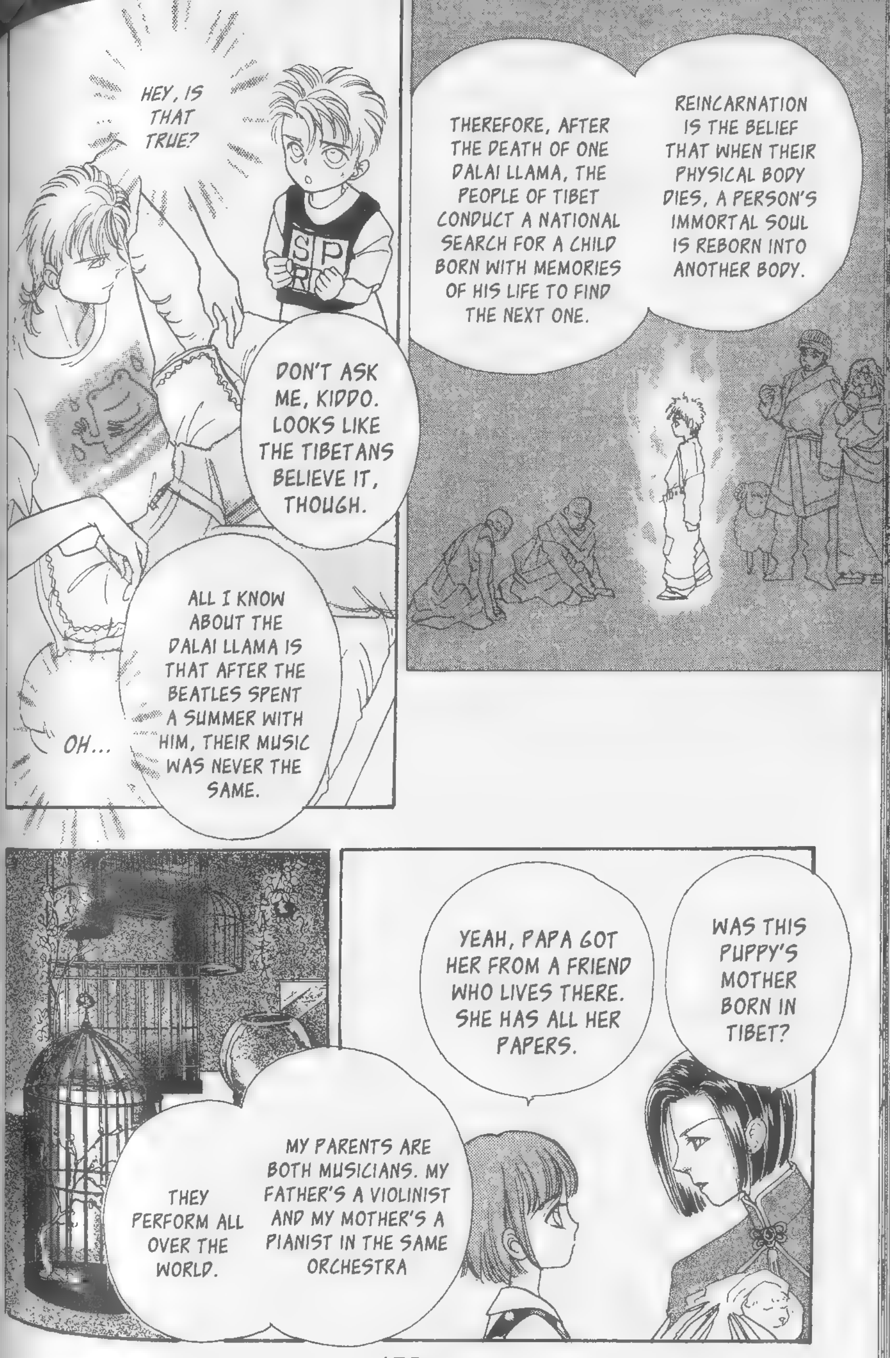

HEY, CHARM!
THIS IS YOUR PUPPY! TAKE CARE OF HER!
I DON'T KNOW, CATHERINE...
SHE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE SHE'S DOING VERY WELL. I DON'T THINK SHE'S GOING TO MAKE IT.
....
I'M TAKING HER TO THE HOSPITAL!
CATHERINE?
I'LL HAVE A VET LOOK HER OVER.
AWW, WHAT CAN IT HURT? LET HER DO IT.
IT WILL BE A GOOD EXPERIENCE FOR HER.

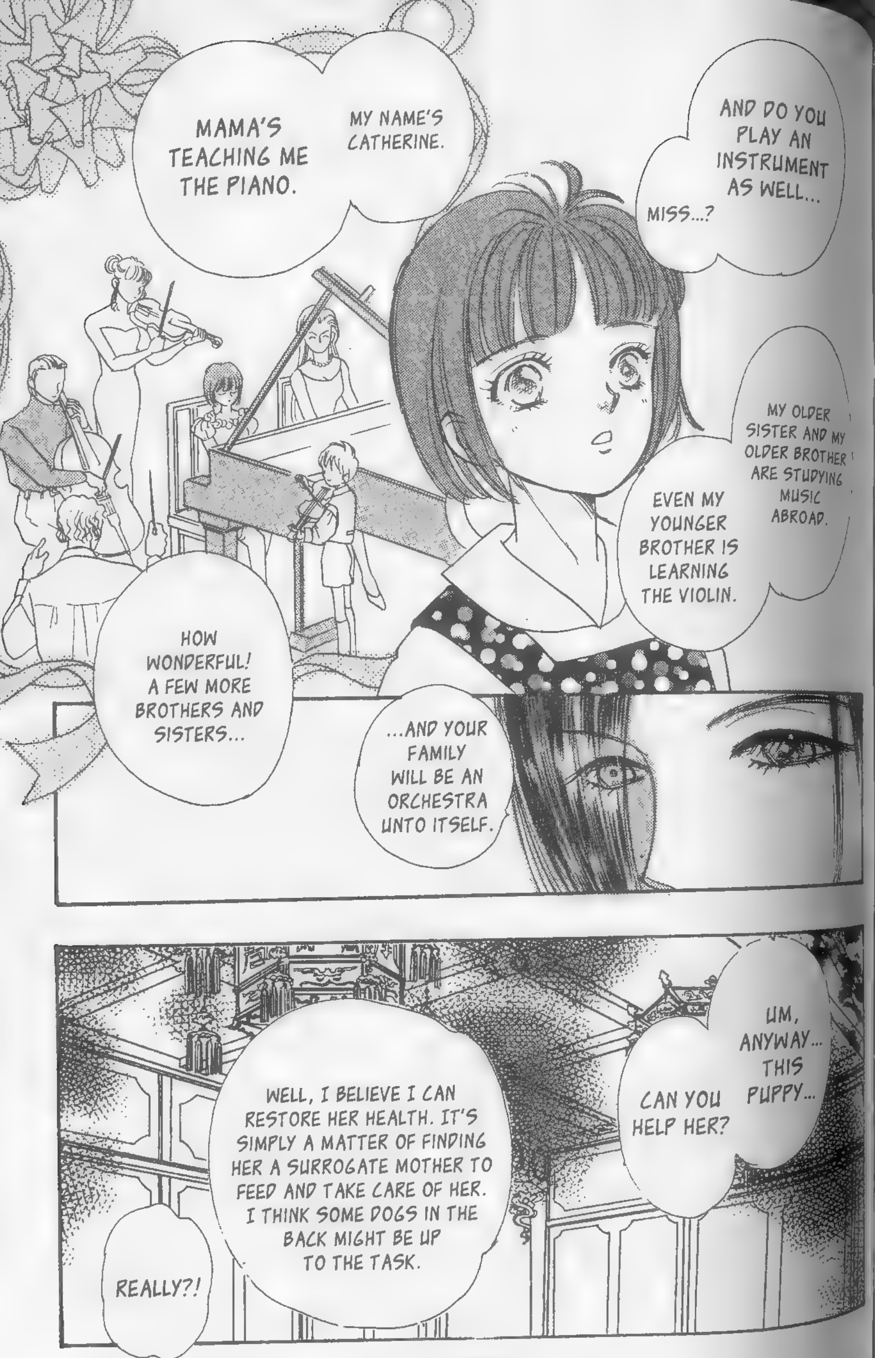

GRRR...
WHOA! DO ALL THOSE PETS BELONG TO THAT BOY?
HI THERE!
DO YOU KNOW IF THERE'S A VET NEARBY?
VET?
THAT'S AN ANIMAL DOCTOR.
OH... WELL, IS COUNT D A VET?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
huff
huff

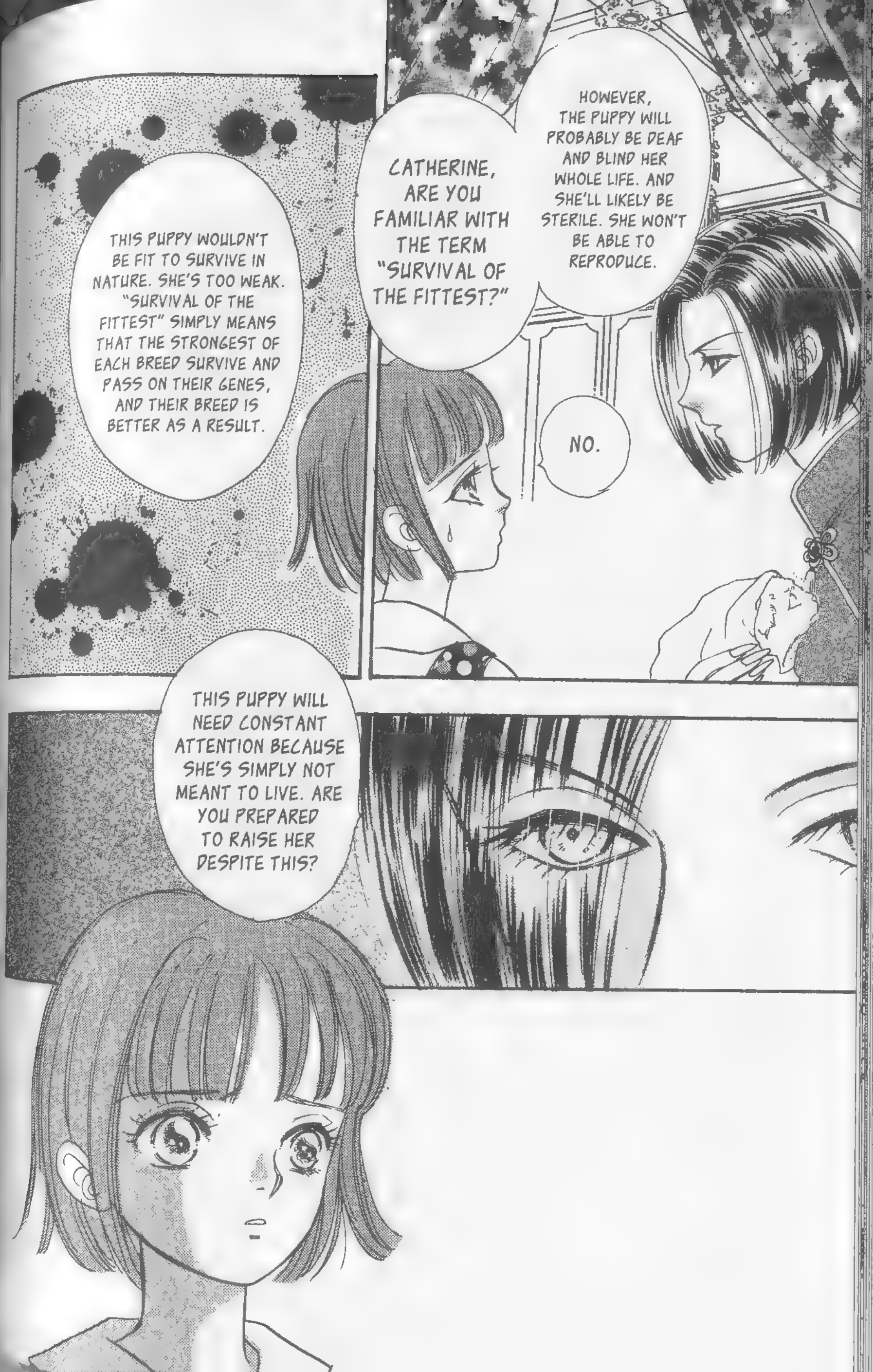

HUH?
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
COUNT D
COUNT D?!
SNIFF
OH, IT'S A PUPPY!
THIS PUPPY IS REALLY SICK.
SHE'LL DIE SOON IF I DON'T GET HER TO A VET!

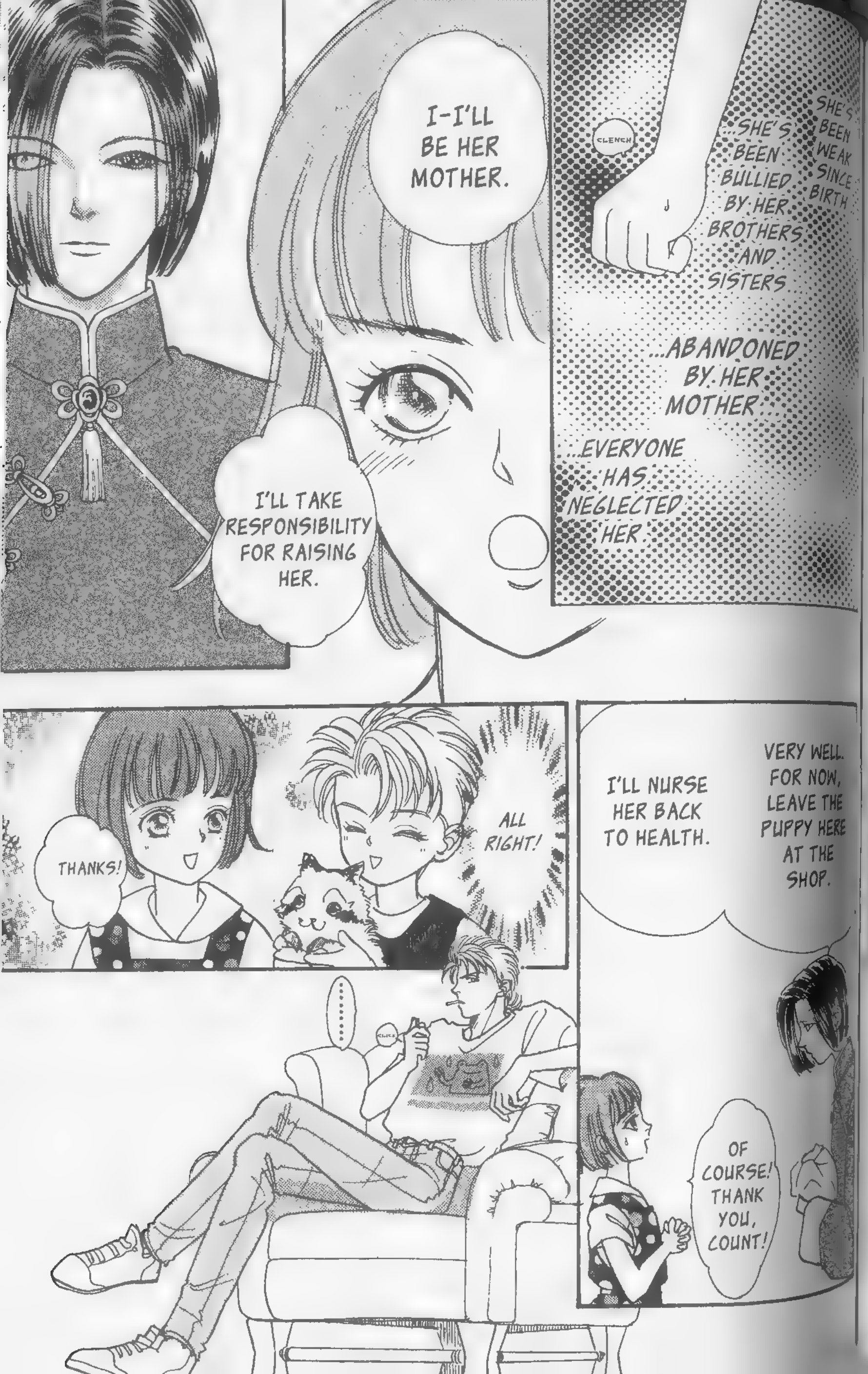

IGNORANT OAF! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU THIS?! I WIND UP REPEATING MYSELF EVERY SINGLE TIME YOU COME OVER! I SWEAR I'D BE BETTER OFF HAVING TEA WITH THE GERBILS.
WELL, WHY DON'T YOU HAVE IT WITH THEM IF YOU'RE SO EAGER! SORRY, BUT I HAVE BETTER THINGS TO REMEMBER THAN YOUR STUPID RULES OF ETIQUETTE!
YOU DO NOT DRINK TEA WITH YOUR SPOON STILL IN THE CUP! AND YOU NEVER, NEVER BELCH OUT "TWINKLE, TWINKLE LITTLE STAR" WHEN YOU'RE DONE DRINKING!
HEY, I DID THAT SO YOU COULD SING ALONG!
Uh... Should we stop them?
DON'T WORRY, THEY'RE ALWAYS LIKE THIS.
COUNT!
BIG BRO!
AH, A GUEST, PARDON ME.
YO, CHRIS.
Um... well...
SHE NEEDS OUR HELP, COUNT. SHE HAS A PUPPY THAT'S SICK.
SICK?
THIS IS A PET SHOP, NOT AN ANIMAL HOSPITAL. SHE NEEDS A--

……
OH, MY... WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
FINE, LET'S TAKE A LOOK.
A LHASA APSO...
AND AN ALBINO AT THAT.
HEY! THOSE ARE ILLEGAL, AREN'T THEY?!
NO, NO, DETECTIVE!
THEY'RE NOT ILLEGAL, JUST RARE.
MOST PET SHOPS WOULD CHARGE A FORTUNE FOR A LHASA APSO.
FOR YEARS, THIS BREED WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "PHANTOM DOG."
PHANTOM DOG?!

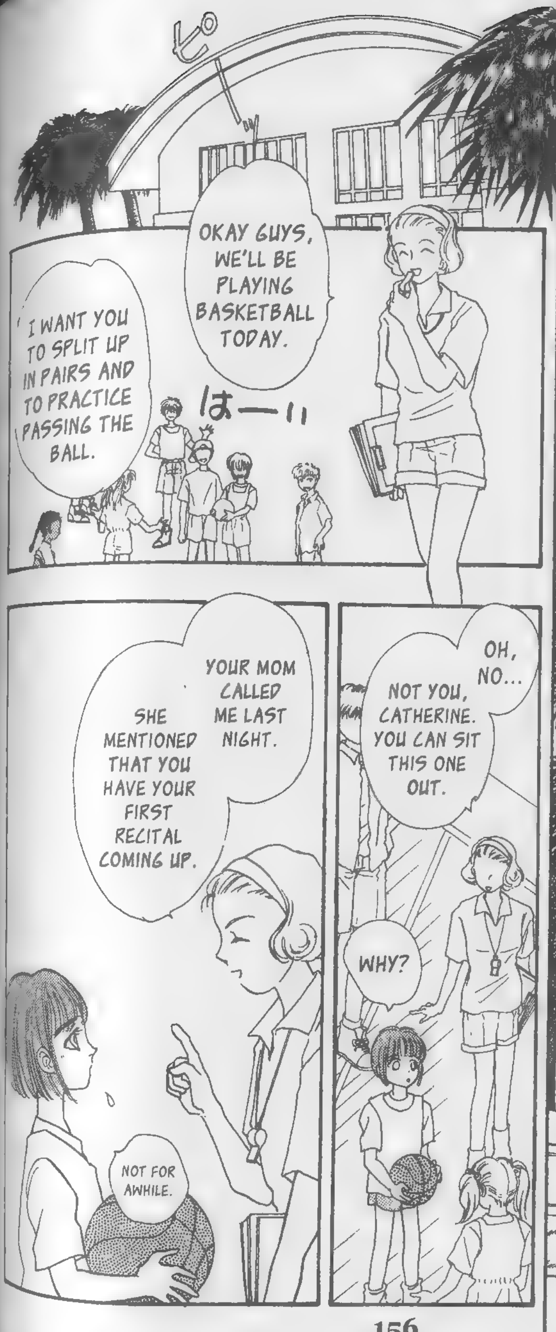

"LHASA APSO" LITERALLY MEANS "GOAT OF LHASA." LHASA IS TIBET'S CAPITAL CITY.
TIBETANS CONSIDER THESE DOGS TO BE SACRED ANIMALS THAT PROTECT THE SOULS OF THE DEAD AND CAN HEAR THE VOICES OF SPIRITS.
FOR YEARS, THESE DOGS WERE RAISED IN TEMPLES THAT WERE HIDDEN DEEP INSIDE THE MOUNTAINS OF TIBET.
LHASA APSOS ARE RELATED TO THE PEKINGESE AND SHIH TZU BUT HAVE REMAINED PURE-BLOODED OVER THE CENTURIES DUE IN LARGE PART TO THIS INITIAL ISOLATION.
IN FACT, THEY REALLY DIDN'T LEAVE ASIA UNTIL 1930, WHEN THE BREED MADE ITS WAY TO EUROPE. NEEDLESS TO SAY, DETECTIVE, THEY PROVED TO BE QUITE POPULAR, AND IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR LHASA APSOS TO CATCH ON AS PETS.
HUH. SO THIS LITTLE GIRL...
...GOT OUT OF THE COUNTRY AROUND THE SAME TIME AS THE DALAI LLAMA?
HE'S THE PRESIDENT OF TIBET.
DALAI LLAMA?!
At least, I think.
YOU IDIOT! PICK UP A BOOK, WHY DON'T YOU?!
THE DALAI LLAMA IS THE FOREMOST POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADER OF THE TIBETAN PEOPLE.
HOWEVER, HE IS NOT CHOSEN BY ROYAL LINEAGE, OR ELECTED, OR NOMINATED BY COMMITTEE...
HE HOLDS HIS RANK BECAUSE OF REINCARNATION.
REINCAR-NATION?

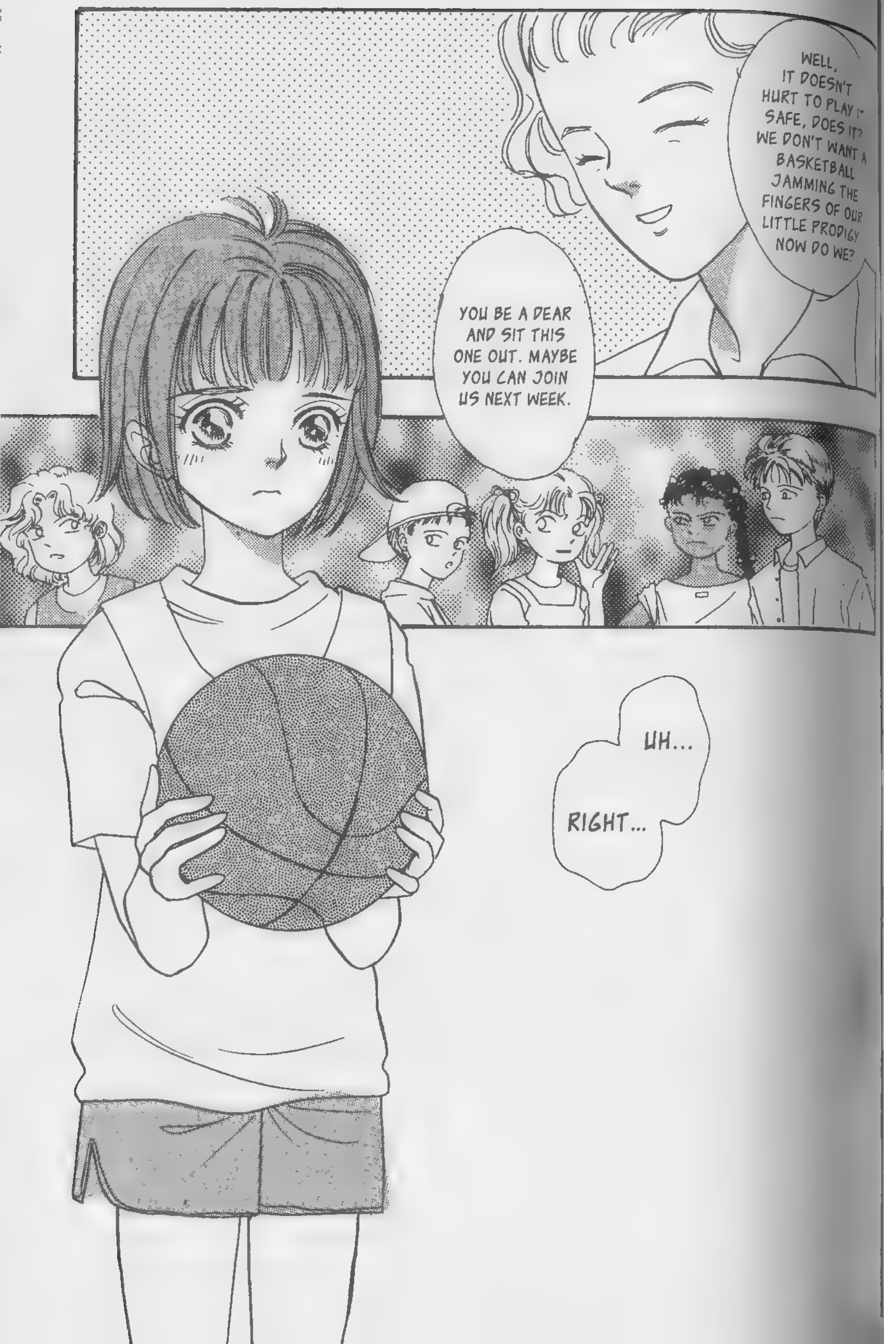

REINCARNATION IS THE BELIEF THAT WHEN THEIR PHYSICAL BODY DIES, A PERSON'S IMMORTAL SOUL IS REBORN INTO ANOTHER BODY.
THEREFORE, AFTER THE DEATH OF ONE DALAI LLAMA, THE PEOPLE OF TIBET CONDUCT A NATIONAL SEARCH FOR A CHILD BORN WITH MEMORIES OF HIS LIFE TO FIND THE NEXT ONE.
HEY, IS THAT TRUE?
SPR
DON'T ASK ME, KIDDO. LOOKS LIKE THE TIBETANS BELIEVE IT, THOUGH.
ALL I KNOW ABOUT THE DALAI LLAMA IS THAT AFTER THE BEATLES SPENT A SUMMER WITH HIM, THEIR MUSIC WAS NEVER THE SAME.
OH...
WAS THIS PUPPY'S MOTHER BORN IN TIBET?
YEAH, PAPA GOT HER FROM A FRIEND WHO LIVES THERE. SHE HAS ALL HER PAPERS.
MY PARENTS ARE BOTH MUSICIANS. MY FATHER'S A VIOLINIST AND MY MOTHER'S A PIANIST IN THE SAME ORCHESTRA
THEY PERFORM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

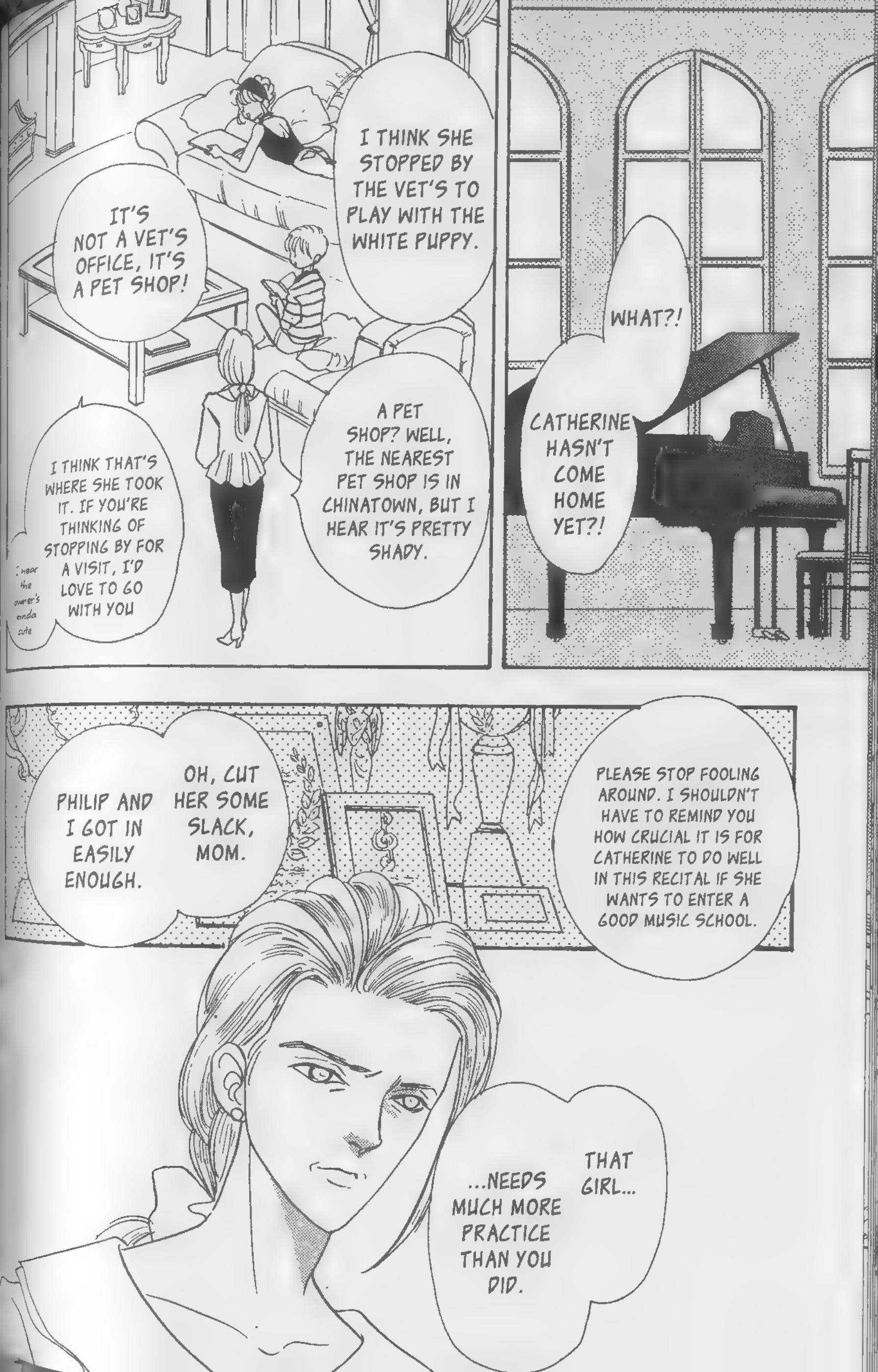

AND DO YOU PLAY AN INSTRUMENT AS WELL...
MISS...?
MY NAME'S CATHERINE.
MAMA'S TEACHING ME THE PIANO.
MY OLDER SISTER AND MY OLDER BROTHER ARE STUDYING MUSIC ABROAD.
EVEN MY YOUNGER BROTHER IS LEARNING THE VIOLIN.
HOW WONDERFUL! A FEW MORE BROTHERS AND SISTERS...
...AND YOUR FAMILY WILL BE AN ORCHESTRA UNTO ITSELF.
UM, ANYWAY... THIS PUPPY...
CAN YOU HELP HER?
WELL, I BELIEVE I CAN RESTORE HER HEALTH. IT'S SIMPLY A MATTER OF FINDING HER A SURROGATE MOTHER TO FEED AND TAKE CARE OF HER. I THINK SOME DOGS IN THE BACK MIGHT BE UP TO THE TASK.
REALLY?!

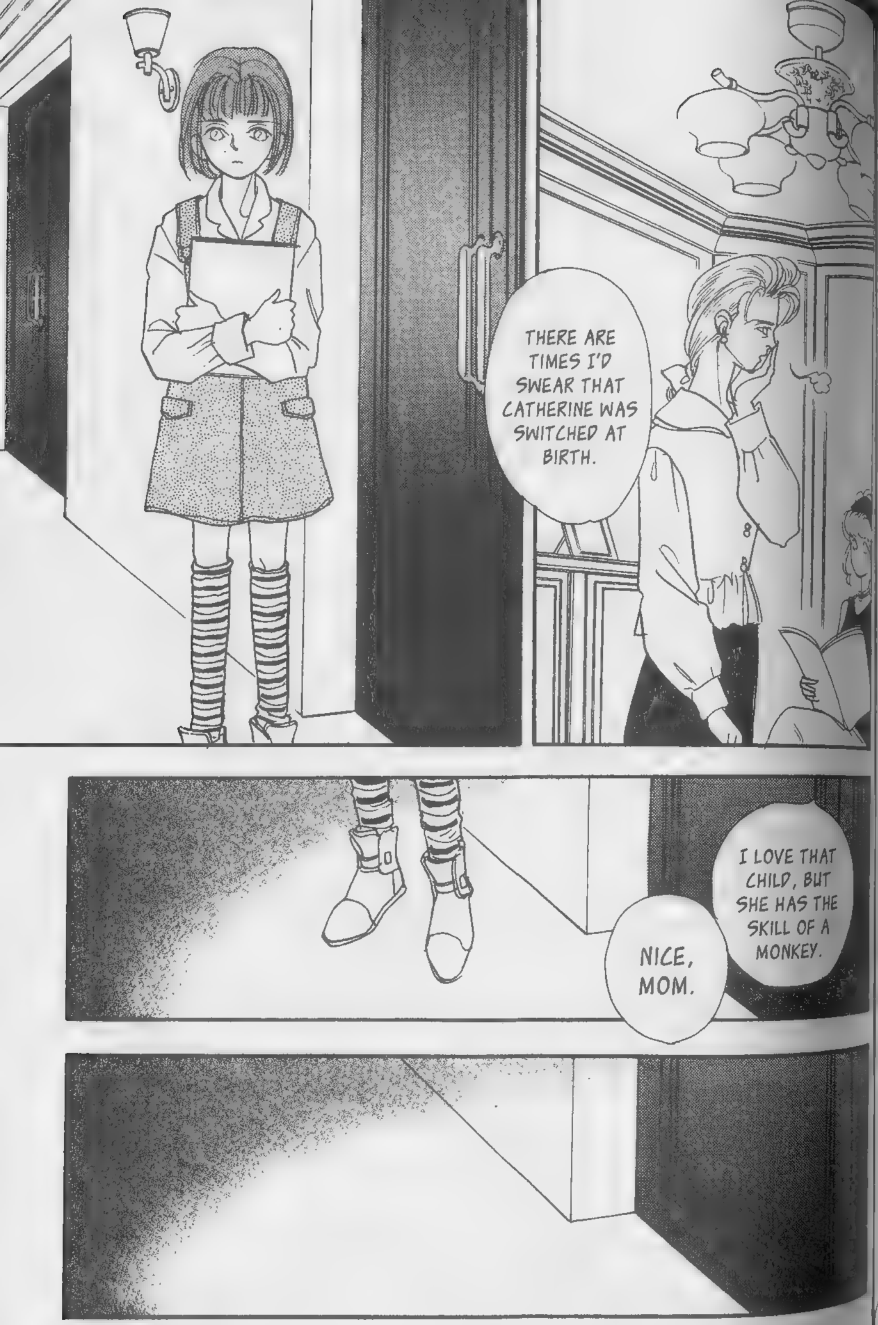

CATHERINE, ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST?"
NO.
THIS PUPPY WOULDN'T BE FIT TO SURVIVE IN NATURE. SHE'S TOO WEAK. "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST" SIMPLY MEANS THAT THE STRONGEST OF EACH BREED SURVIVE AND PASS ON THEIR GENES, AND THEIR BREED IS BETTER AS A RESULT.
HOWEVER, THE PUPPY WILL PROBABLY BE DEAF AND BLIND HER WHOLE LIFE. AND SHE'LL LIKELY BE STERILE. SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO REPRODUCE.
THIS PUPPY WILL NEED CONSTANT ATTENTION BECAUSE SHE'S SIMPLY NOT MEANT TO LIVE. ARE YOU PREPARED TO RAISE HER DESPITE THIS?

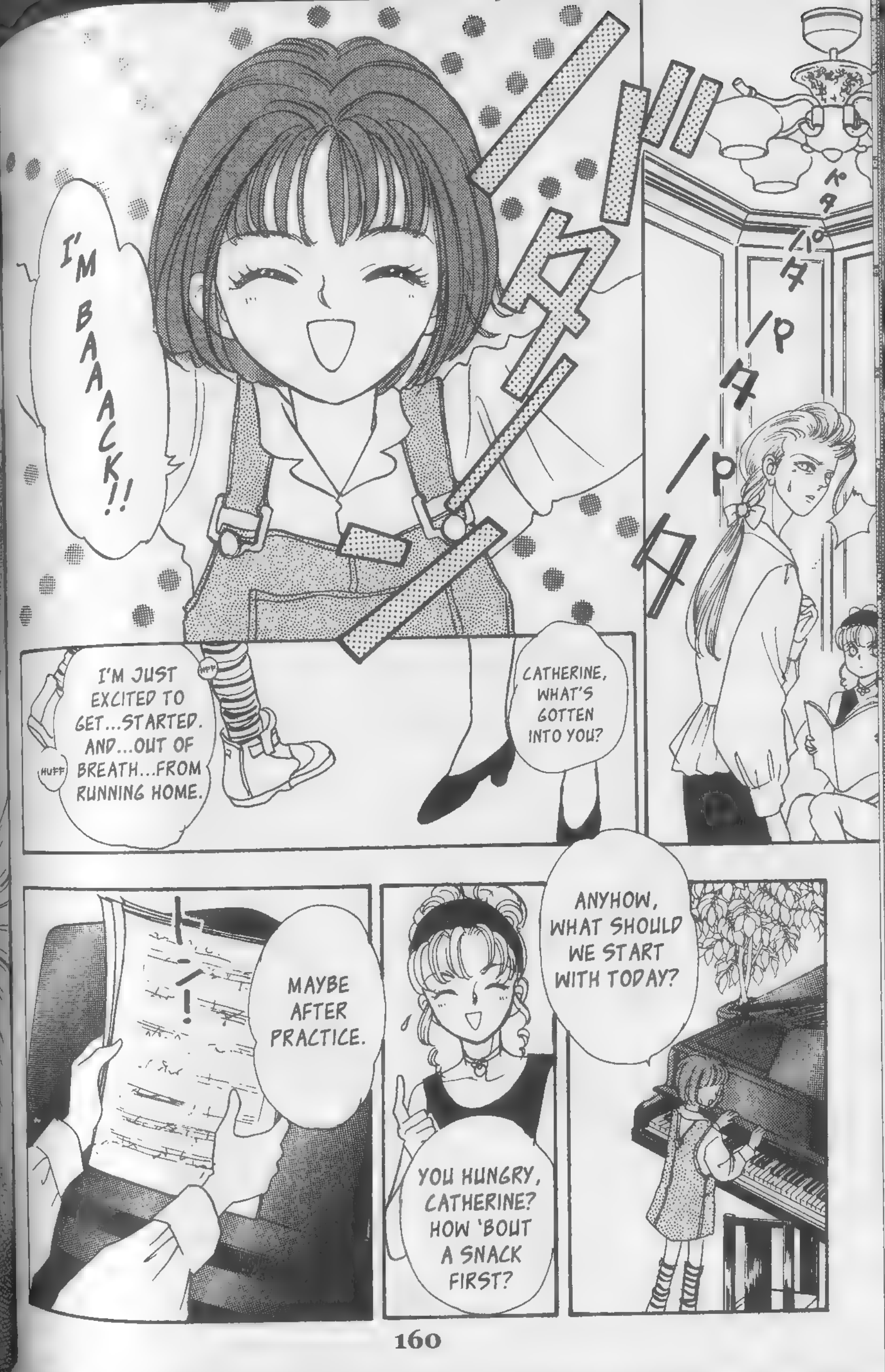

SHE'S BEEN WEAK SINCE BIRTH
...SHE'S BEEN BULLIED BY HER BROTHERS AND SISTERS
CLENCH
...ABANDONED BY HER MOTHER
...EVERYONE HAS NEGLECTED HER
I-I'LL BE HER MOTHER.
I'LL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR RAISING HER.
I'LL NURSE HER BACK TO HEALTH.
VERY WELL. FOR NOW, LEAVE THE PUPPY HERE AT THE SHOP.
OF COURSE! THANK YOU, COUNT!
ALL RIGHT!
THANKS!
......
CLICK

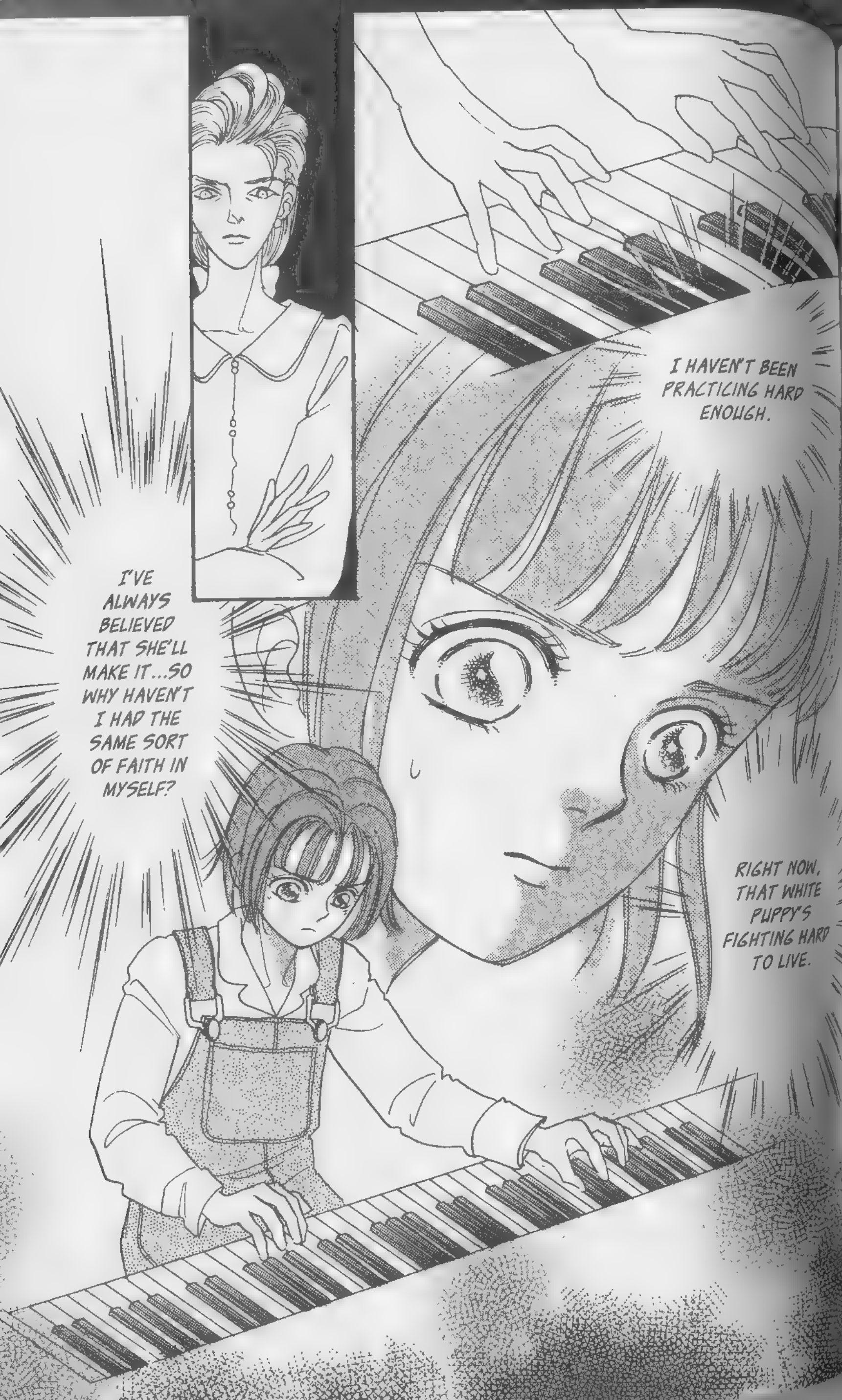

ピー
OKAY GUYS, WE'LL BE PLAYING BASKETBALL TODAY.
I WANT YOU TO SPLIT UP IN PAIRS AND TO PRACTICE PASSING THE BALL.
はーい
OH, NO...
NOT YOU, CATHERINE. YOU CAN SIT THIS ONE OUT.
WHY?
YOUR MOM CALLED ME LAST NIGHT.
SHE MENTIONED THAT YOU HAVE YOUR FIRST RECITAL COMING UP.
NOT FOR AWHILE.

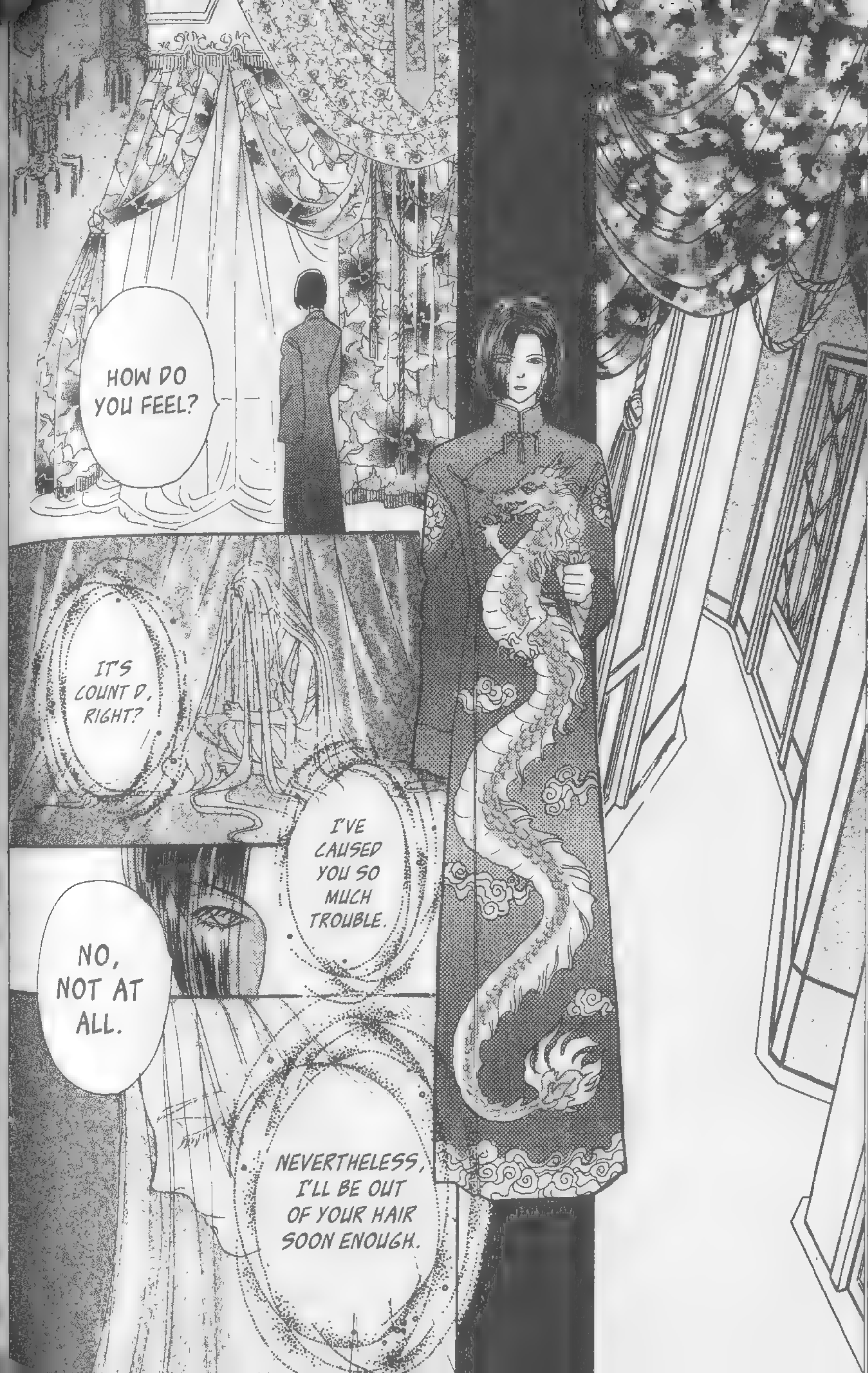

WELL, IT DOESN'T HURT TO PLAY IT SAFE, DOES IT? WE DON'T WANT A BASKETBALL JAMMING THE FINGERS OF OUR LITTLE PRODIGY NOW DO WE?
YOU BE A DEAR AND SIT THIS ONE OUT. MAYBE YOU CAN JOIN US NEXT WEEK.
UH...
RIGHT...

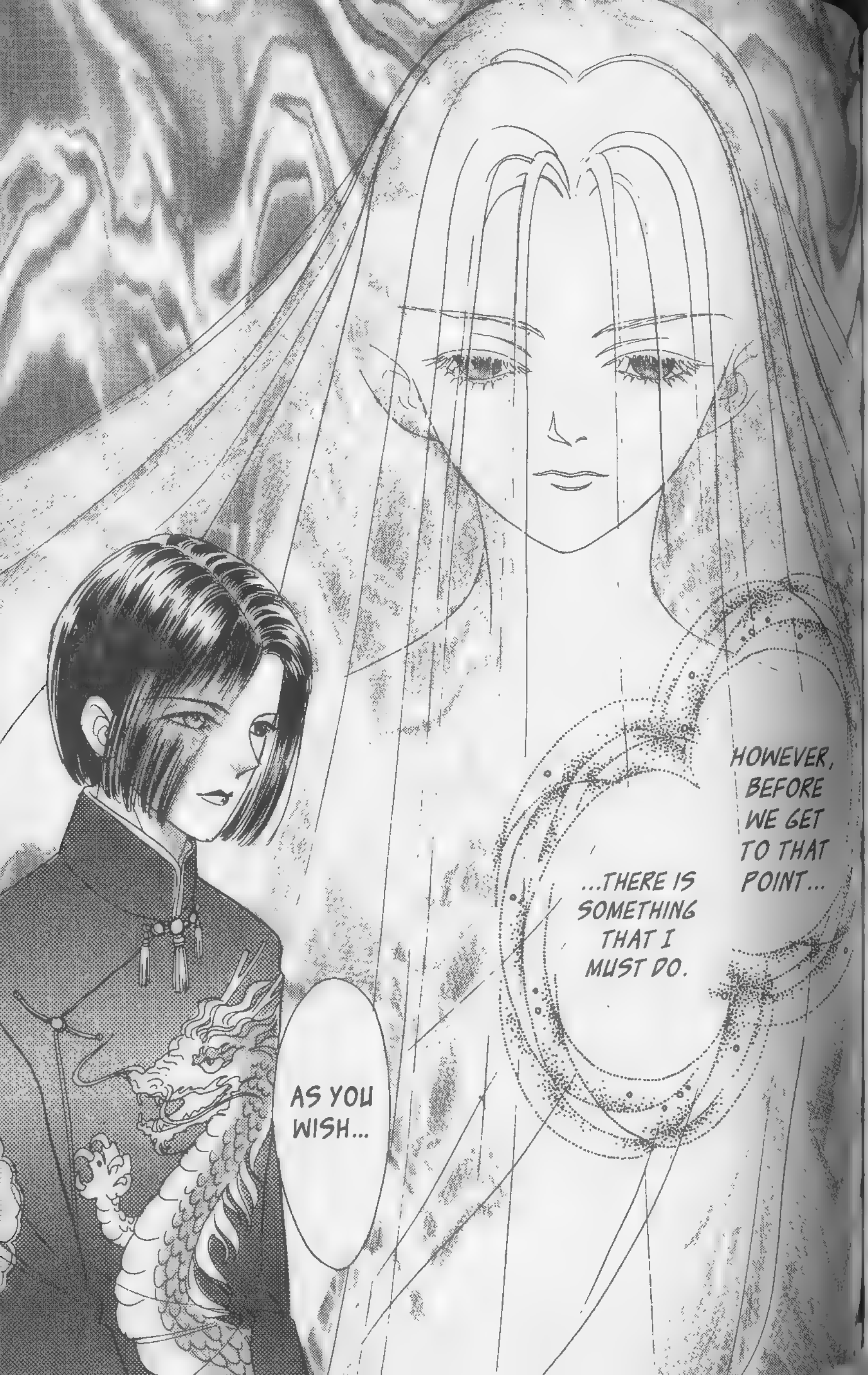

CATHERINE HASN'T COME HOME YET?!
WHAT?!
I THINK SHE STOPPED BY THE VET'S TO PLAY WITH THE WHITE PUPPY.
IT'S NOT A VET'S OFFICE, IT'S A PET SHOP!
A PET SHOP? WELL, THE NEAREST PET SHOP IS IN CHINATOWN, BUT I HEAR IT'S PRETTY SHADY.
I THINK THAT'S WHERE SHE TOOK IT. IF YOU'RE THINKING OF STOPPING BY FOR A VISIT, I'D LOVE TO GO WITH YOU
I hear the owner's kinda cute
PLEASE STOP FOOLING AROUND. I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO REMIND YOU HOW CRUCIAL IT IS FOR CATHERINE TO DO WELL IN THIS RECITAL IF SHE WANTS TO ENTER A GOOD MUSIC SCHOOL.
OH, CUT HER SOME SLACK, MOM.
PHILIP AND I GOT IN EASILY ENOUGH.
THAT GIRL...
...NEEDS MUCH MORE PRACTICE THAN YOU DID.

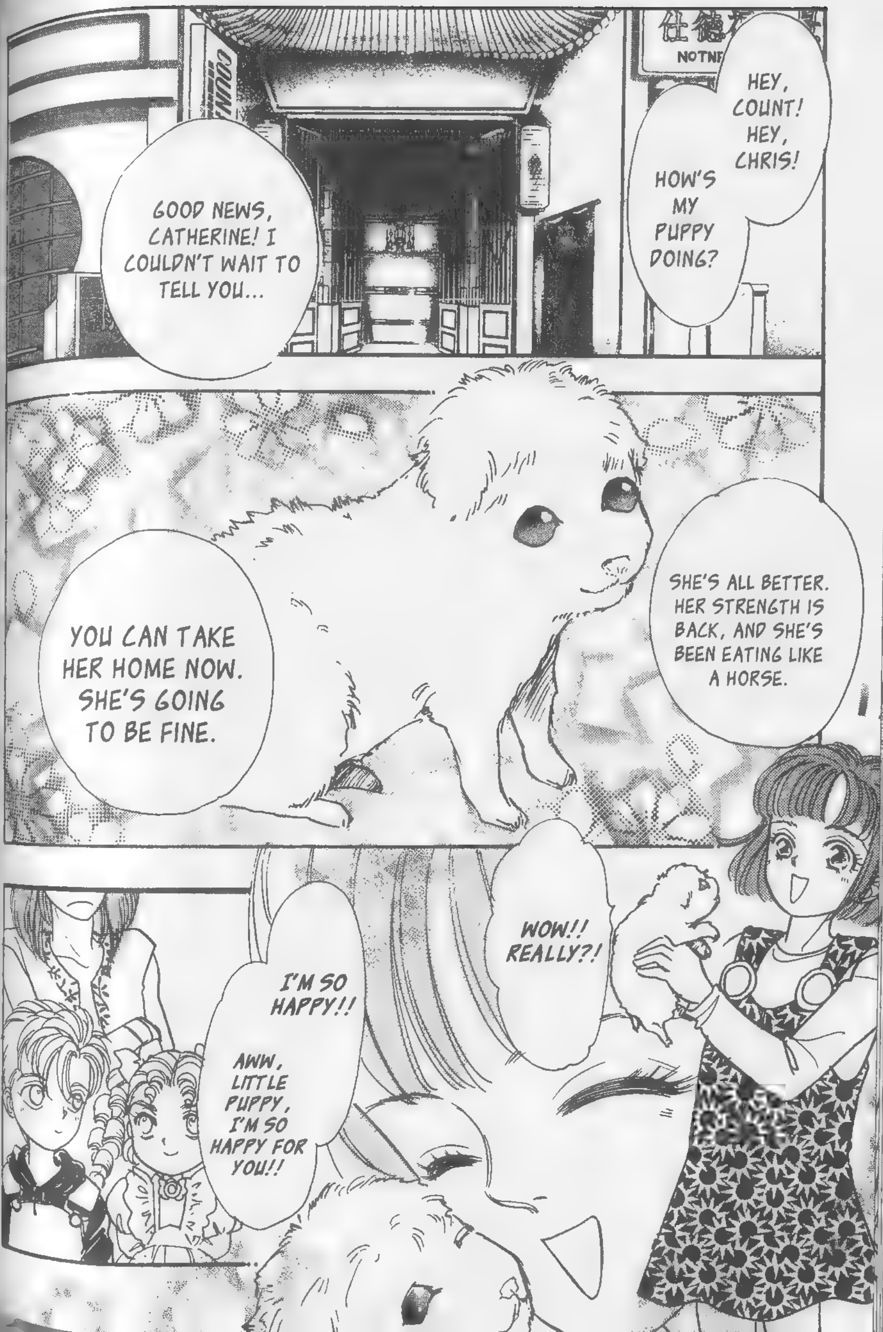

THERE ARE TIMES I'D SWEAR THAT CATHERINE WAS SWITCHED AT BIRTH.
I LOVE THAT CHILD, BUT SHE HAS THE SKILL OF A MONKEY.
NICE, MOM.

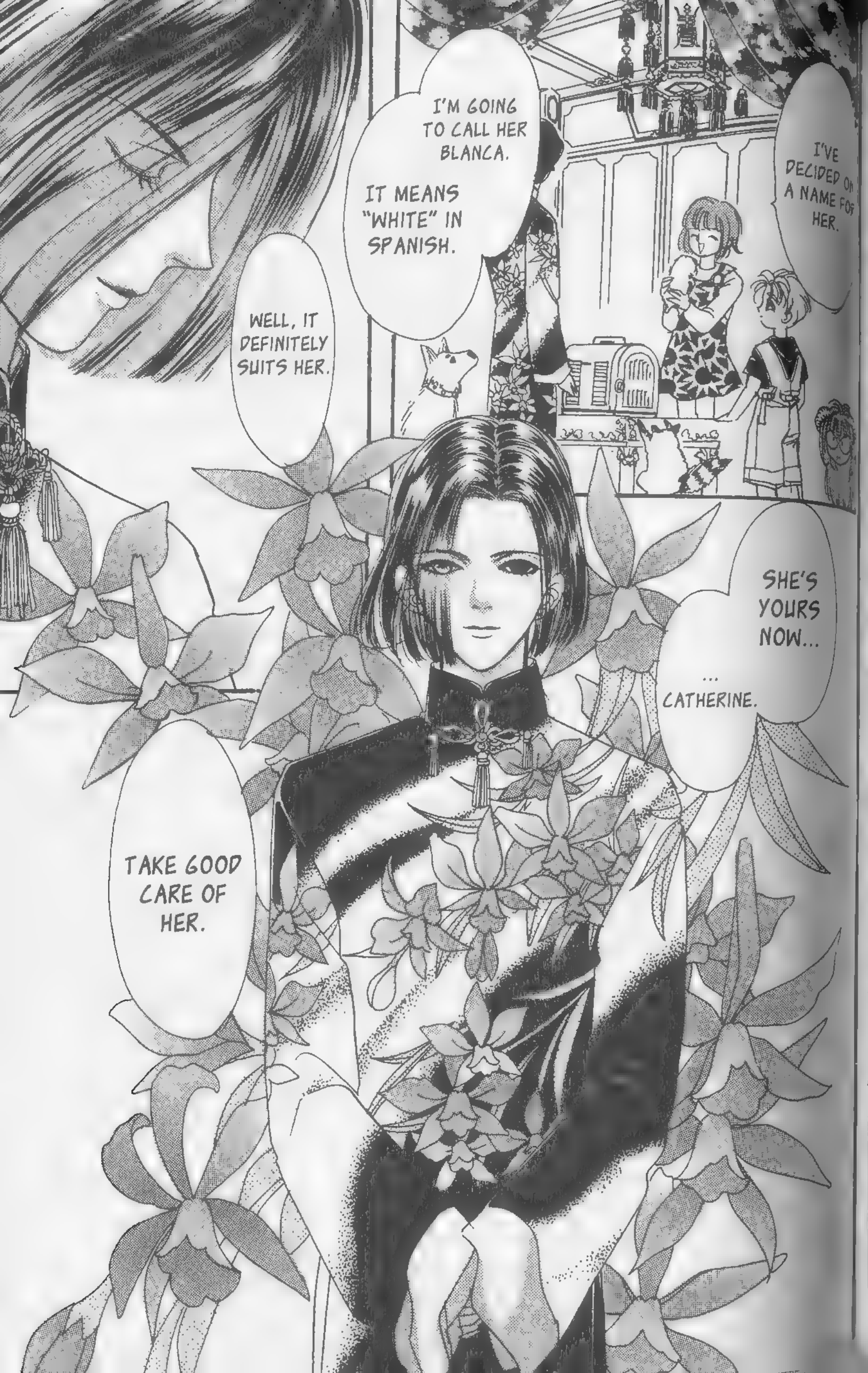

パタパタパタパタ
I'M BAAACK!!
CATHERINE, WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?
I'M JUST EXCITED TO GET...STARTED. AND...OUT OF BREATH...FROM RUNNING HOME.
HUFF
HUFF
ANYHOW, WHAT SHOULD WE START WITH TODAY?
YOU HUNGRY, CATHERINE? HOW 'BOUT A SNACK FIRST?
MAYBE AFTER PRACTICE.
!

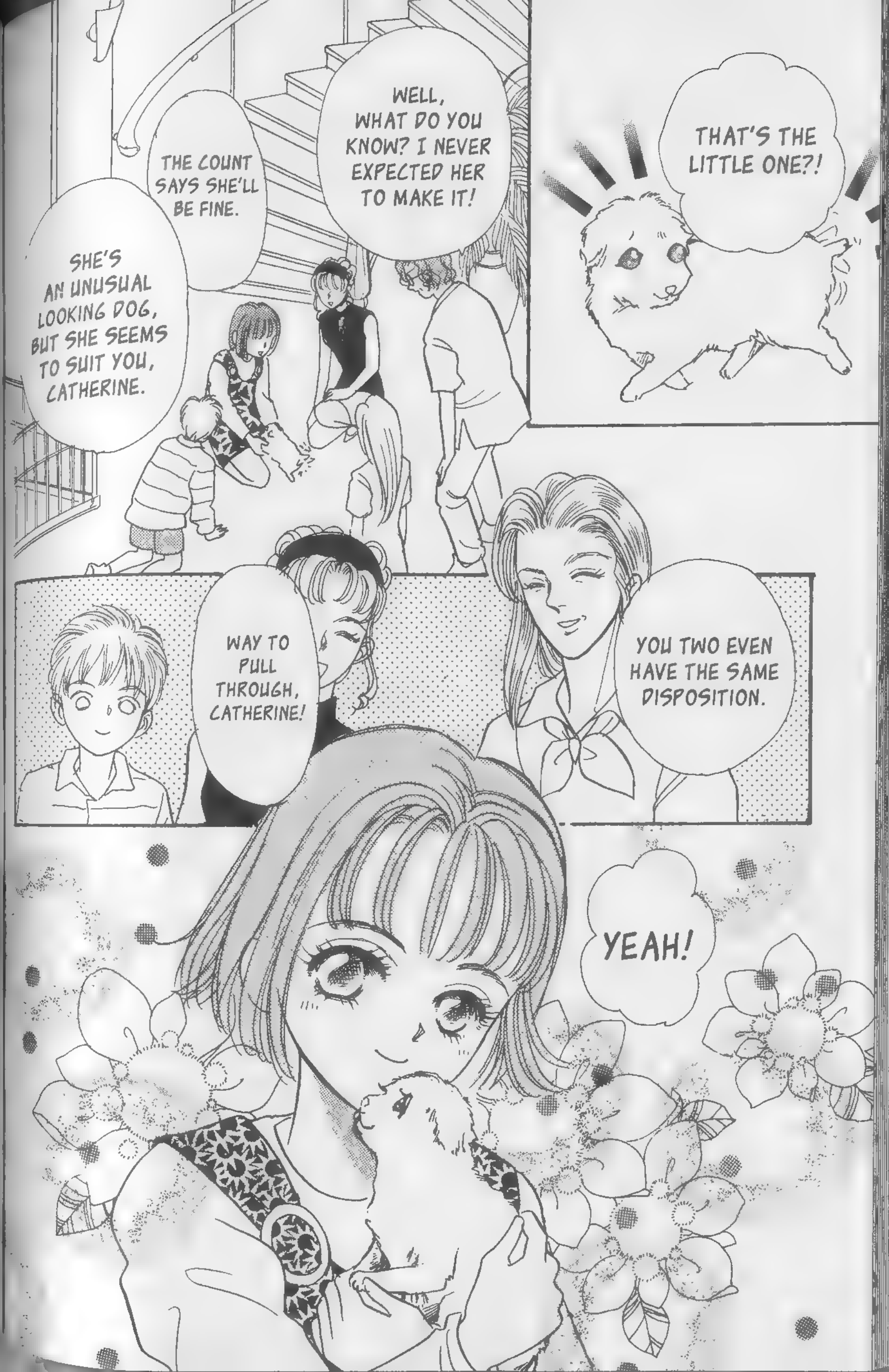

I HAVEN'T BEEN PRACTICING HARD ENOUGH.
RIGHT NOW, THAT WHITE PUPPY'S FIGHTING HARD TO LIVE.
I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT SHE'LL MAKE IT...SO WHY HAVEN'T I HAD THE SAME SORT OF FAITH IN MYSELF?

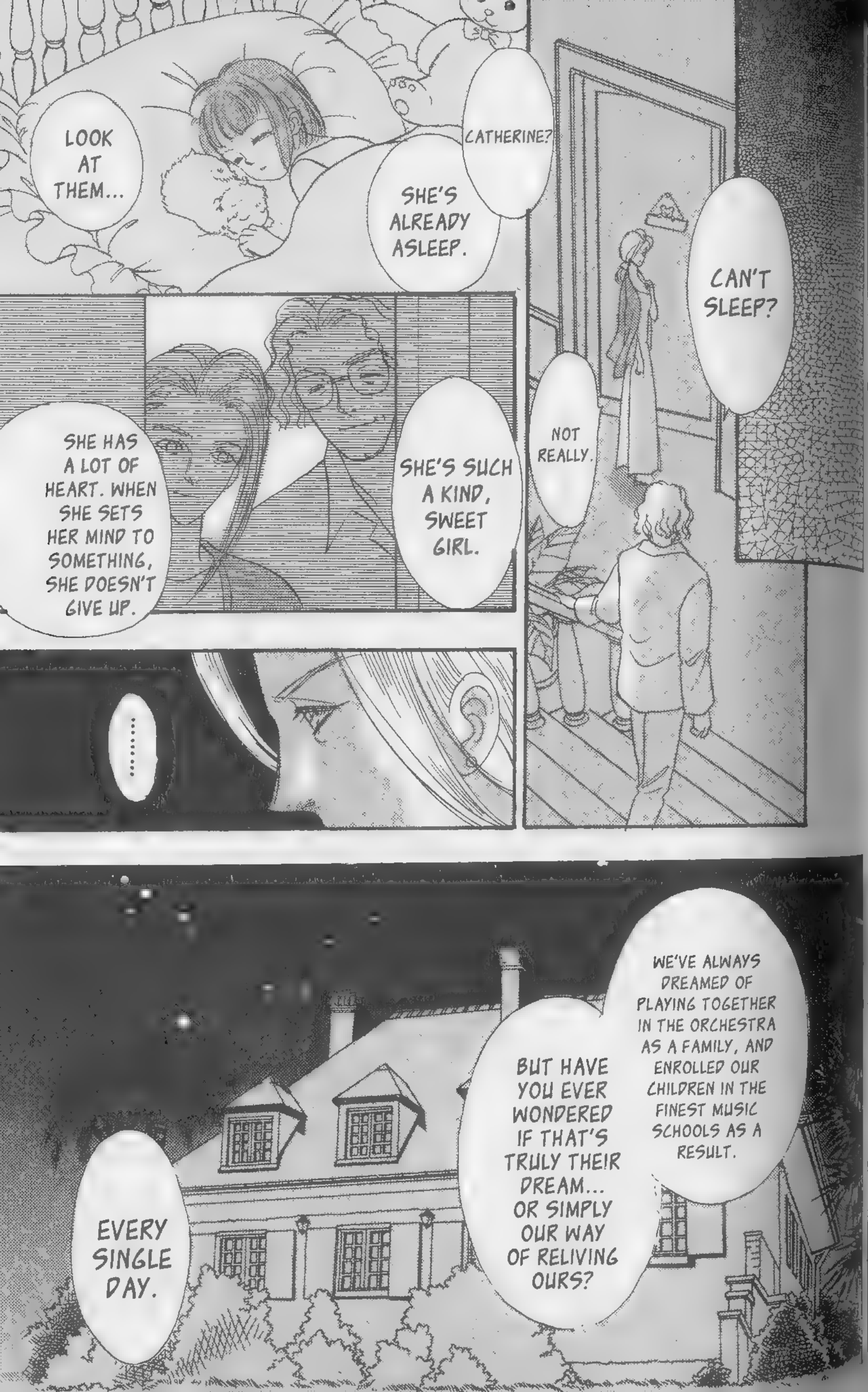

HOW DO YOU FEEL?
IT'S COUNT D, RIGHT?
I'VE CAUSED YOU SO MUCH TROUBLE.
NO, NOT AT ALL.
NEVERTHELESS, I'LL BE OUT OF YOUR HAIR SOON ENOUGH.

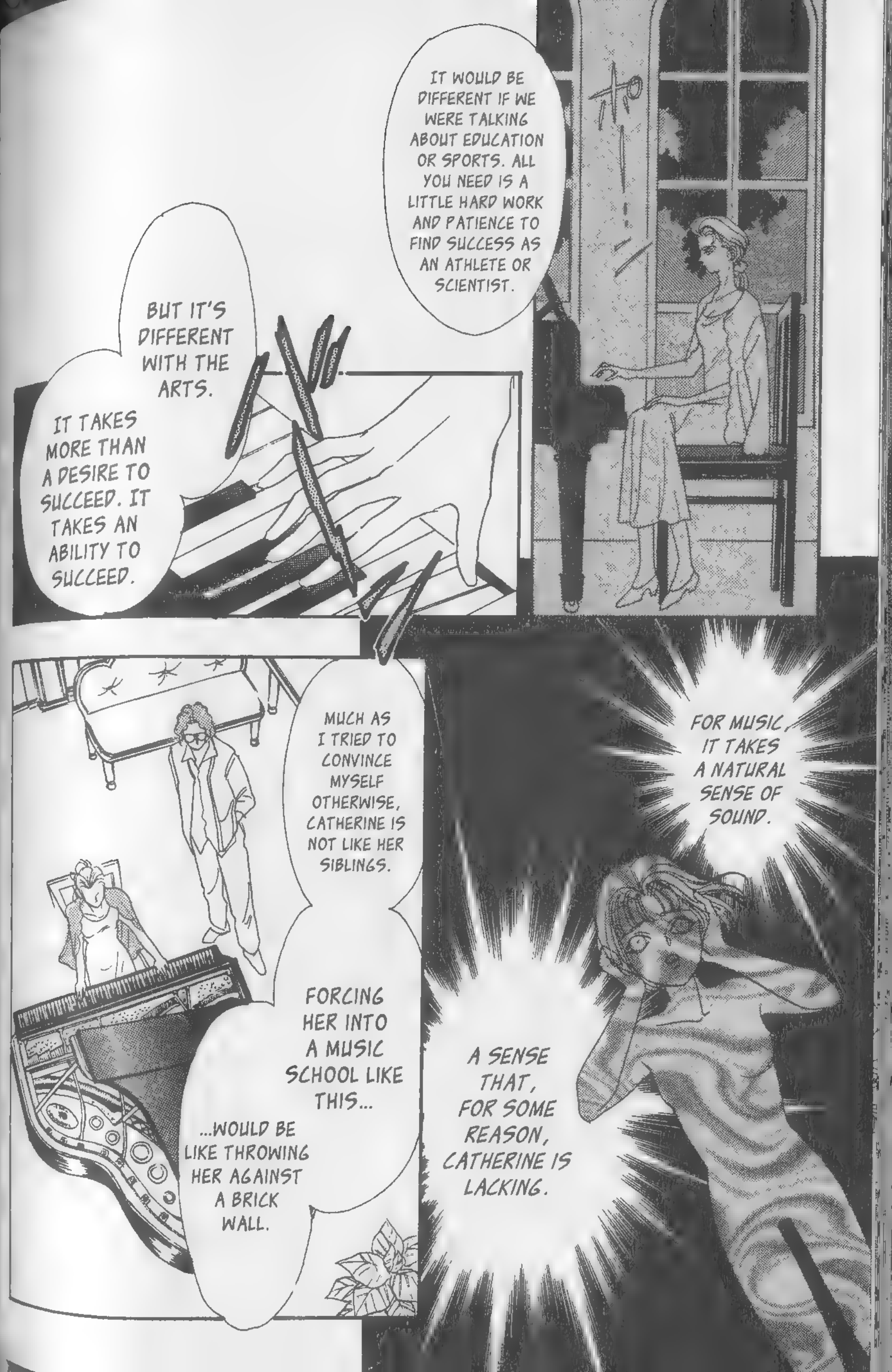

HOWEVER, BEFORE WE GET TO THAT POINT...
...THERE IS SOMETHING THAT I MUST DO.
AS YOU WISH...

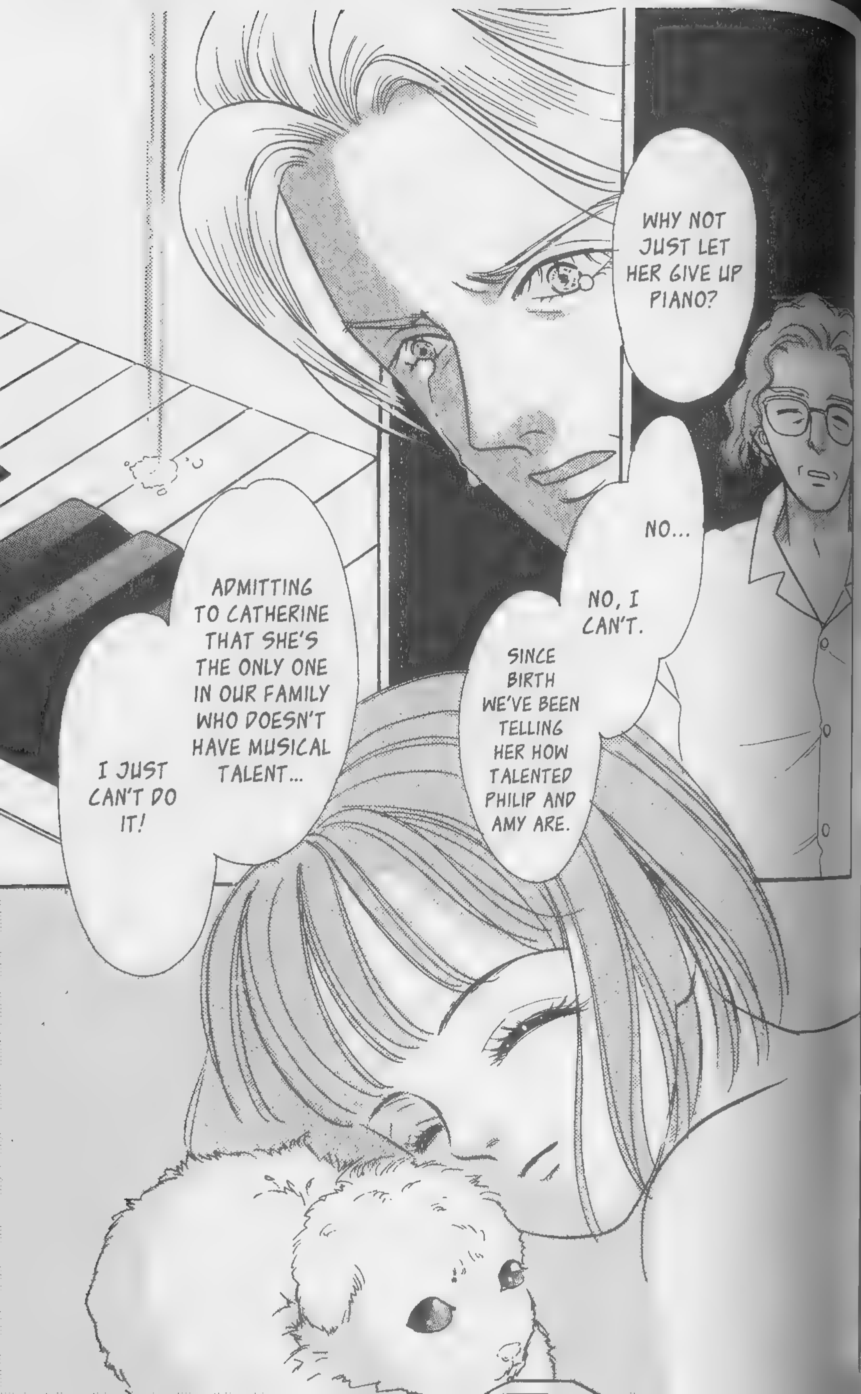

HEY, COUNT! HEY, CHRIS!
HOW'S MY PUPPY DOING?
GOOD NEWS, CATHERINE! I COULDN'T WAIT TO TELL YOU...
SHE'S ALL BETTER. HER STRENGTH IS BACK, AND SHE'S BEEN EATING LIKE A HORSE.
YOU CAN TAKE HER HOME NOW. SHE'S GOING TO BE FINE.
WOW!! REALLY?!
I'M SO HAPPY!!
AWW, LITTLE PUPPY, I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU!!

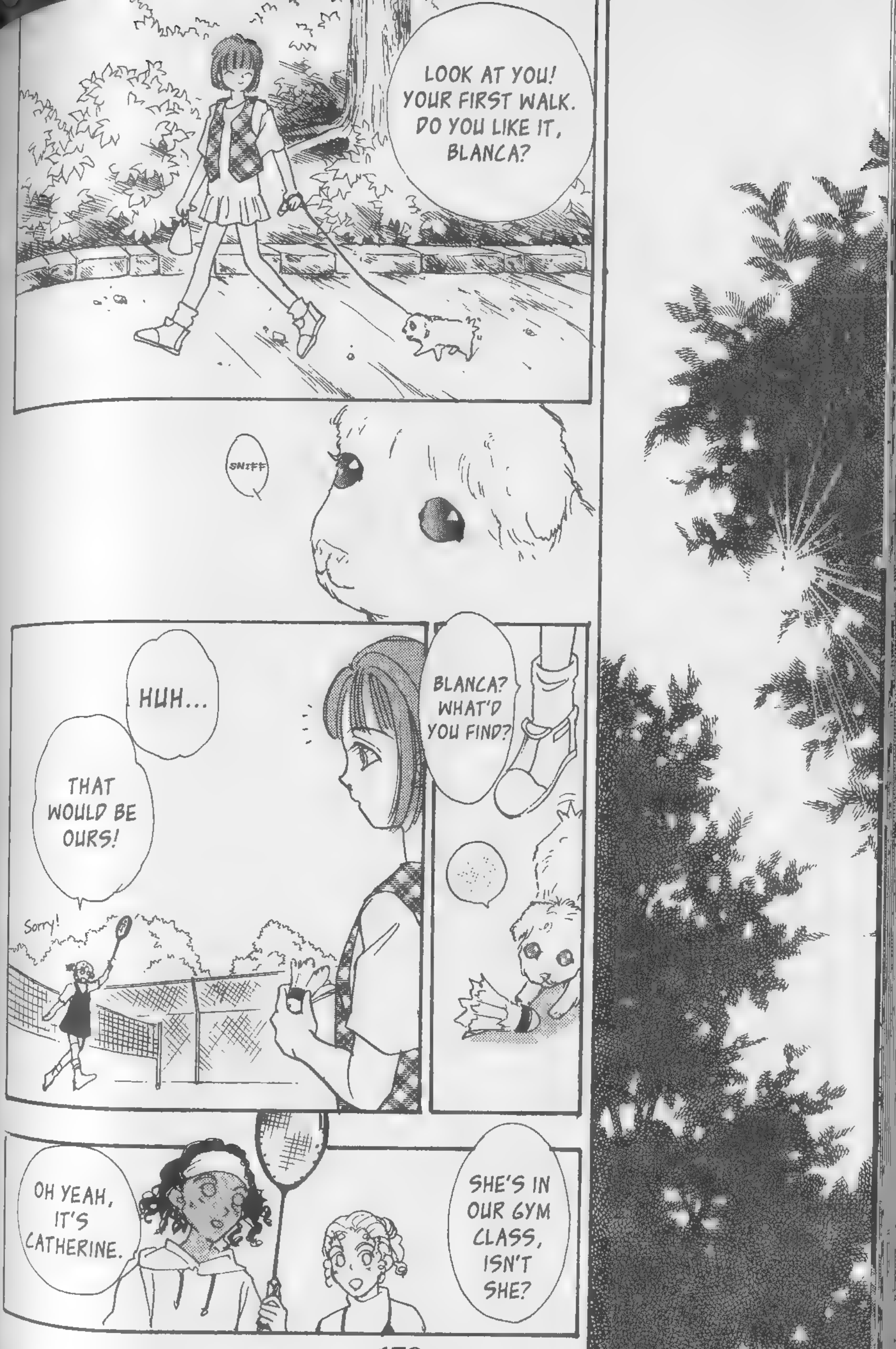

I'VE DECIDED ON A NAME FOR HER.
I'M GOING TO CALL HER BLANCA.
IT MEANS "WHITE" IN SPANISH.
WELL, IT DEFINITELY SUITS HER.
SHE'S YOURS NOW...
... CATHERINE.
TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER.

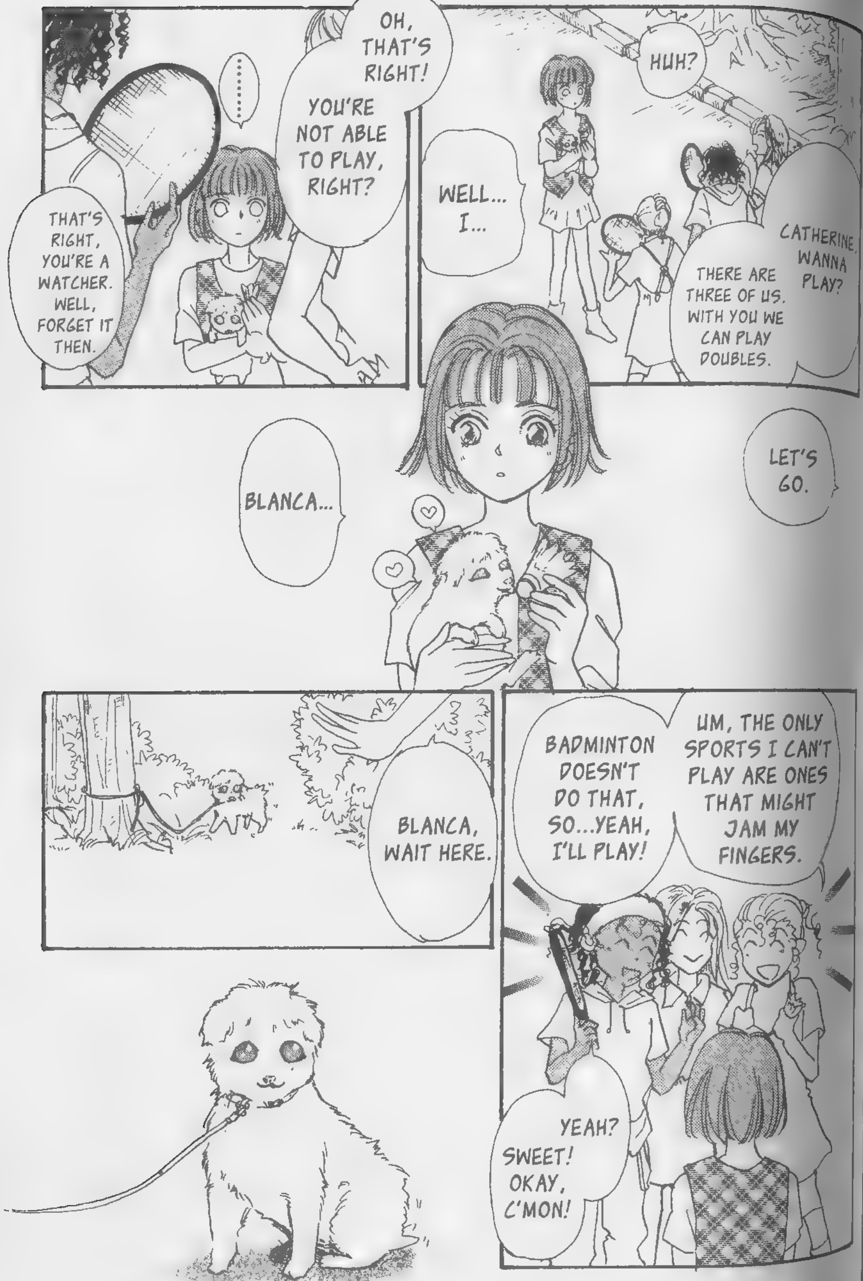

THAT'S THE LITTLE ONE?!
WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW? I NEVER EXPECTED HER TO MAKE IT!
THE COUNT SAYS SHE'LL BE FINE.
SHE'S AN UNUSUAL LOOKING DOG, BUT SHE SEEMS TO SUIT YOU, CATHERINE.
YOU TWO EVEN HAVE THE SAME DISPOSITION.
WAY TO PULL THROUGH, CATHERINE!
YEAH!

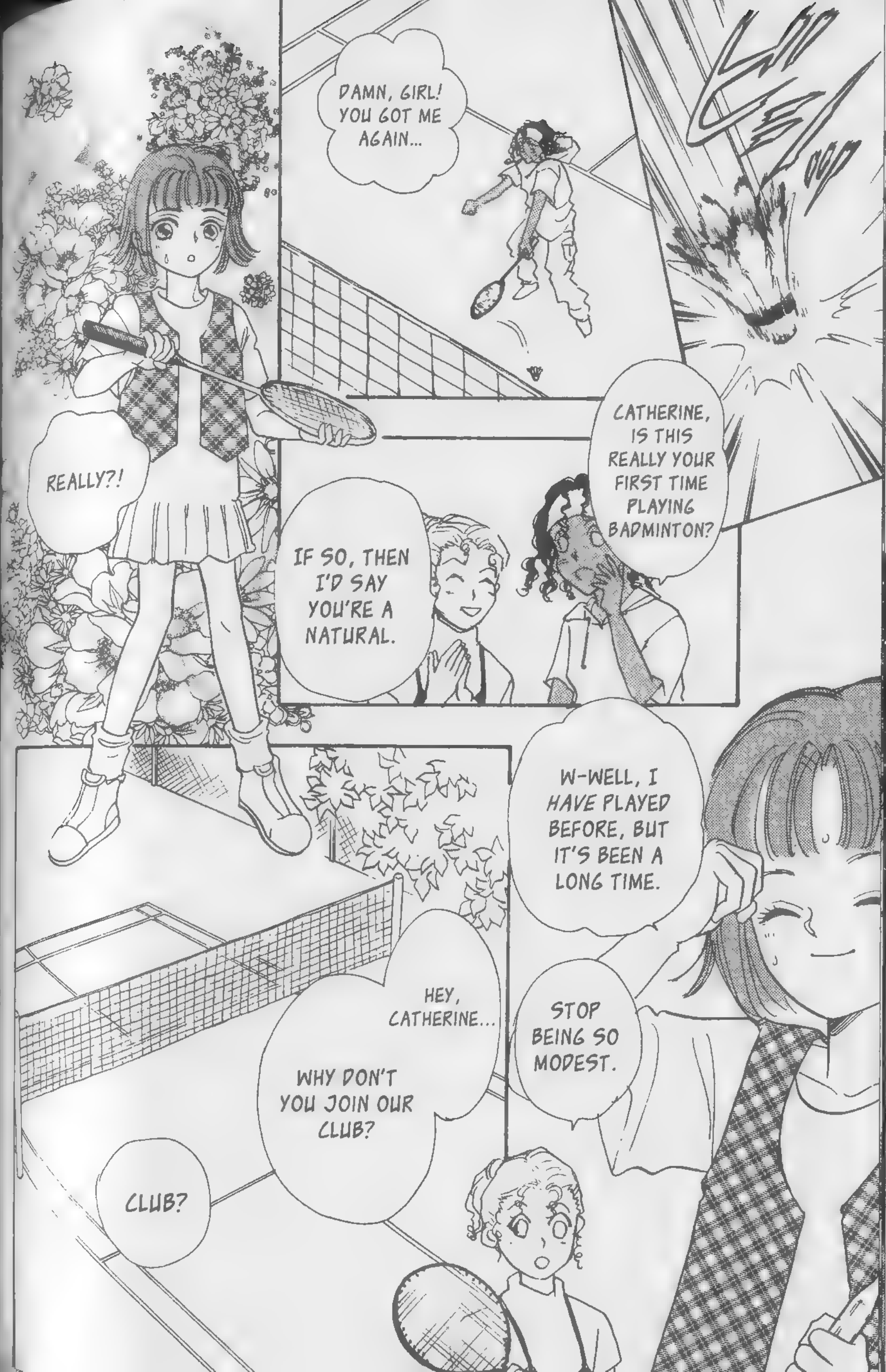

CATHERINE?
SHE'S ALREADY ASLEEP.
LOOK AT THEM...
CAN'T SLEEP?
NOT REALLY.
SHE'S SUCH A KIND, SWEET GIRL.
SHE HAS A LOT OF HEART. WHEN SHE SETS HER MIND TO SOMETHING, SHE DOESN'T GIVE UP.
......
WE'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF PLAYING TOGETHER IN THE ORCHESTRA AS A FAMILY, AND ENROLLED OUR CHILDREN IN THE FINEST MUSIC SCHOOLS AS A RESULT.
BUT HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED IF THAT'S TRULY THEIR DREAM... OR SIMPLY OUR WAY OF RELIVING OURS?
EVERY SINGLE DAY.

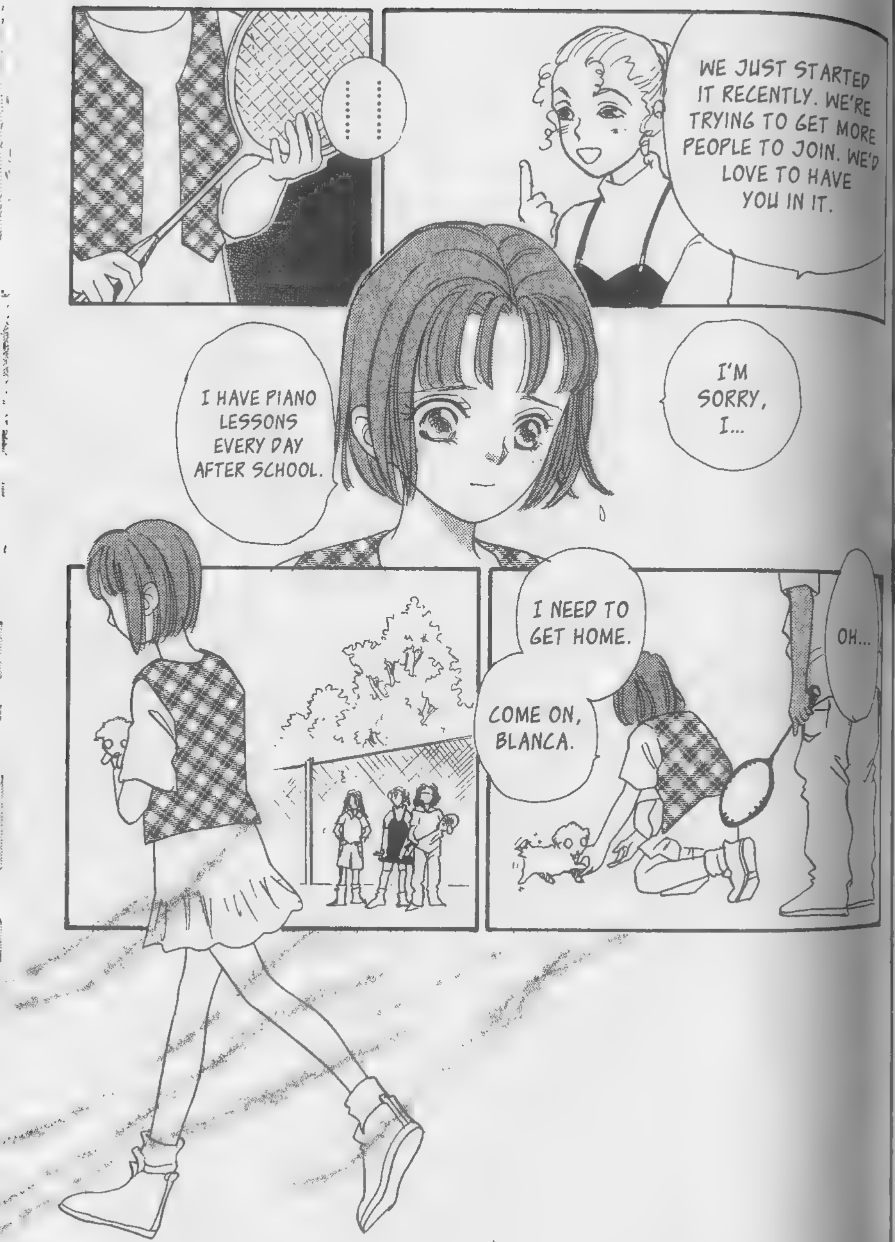

IT WOULD BE DIFFERENT IF WE WERE TALKING ABOUT EDUCATION OR SPORTS. ALL YOU NEED IS A LITTLE HARD WORK AND PATIENCE TO FIND SUCCESS AS AN ATHLETE OR SCIENTIST.
BUT IT'S DIFFERENT WITH THE ARTS.
IT TAKES MORE THAN A DESIRE TO SUCCEED. IT TAKES AN ABILITY TO SUCCEED.
FOR MUSIC, IT TAKES A NATURAL SENSE OF SOUND.
A SENSE THAT, FOR SOME REASON, CATHERINE IS LACKING.
MUCH AS I TRIED TO CONVINCE MYSELF OTHERWISE, CATHERINE IS NOT LIKE HER SIBLINGS.
FORCING HER INTO A MUSIC SCHOOL LIKE THIS...
...WOULD BE LIKE THROWING HER AGAINST A BRICK WALL.

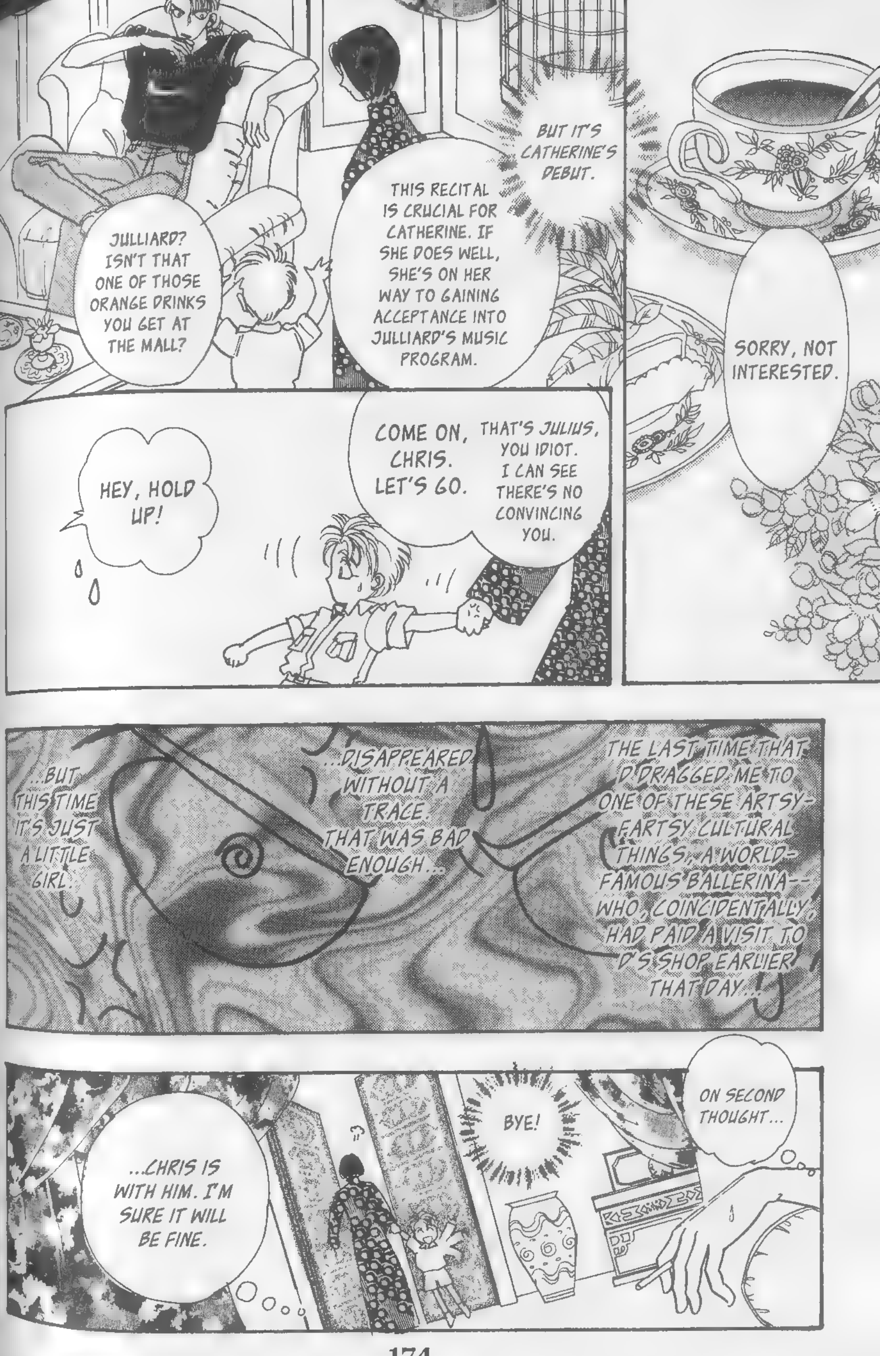

WHY NOT JUST LET HER GIVE UP PIANO?
NO...
NO, I CAN'T.
SINCE BIRTH WE'VE BEEN TELLING HER HOW TALENTED PHILIP AND AMY ARE.
ADMITTING TO CATHERINE THAT SHE'S THE ONLY ONE IN OUR FAMILY WHO DOESN'T HAVE MUSICAL TALENT...
I JUST CAN'T DO IT!

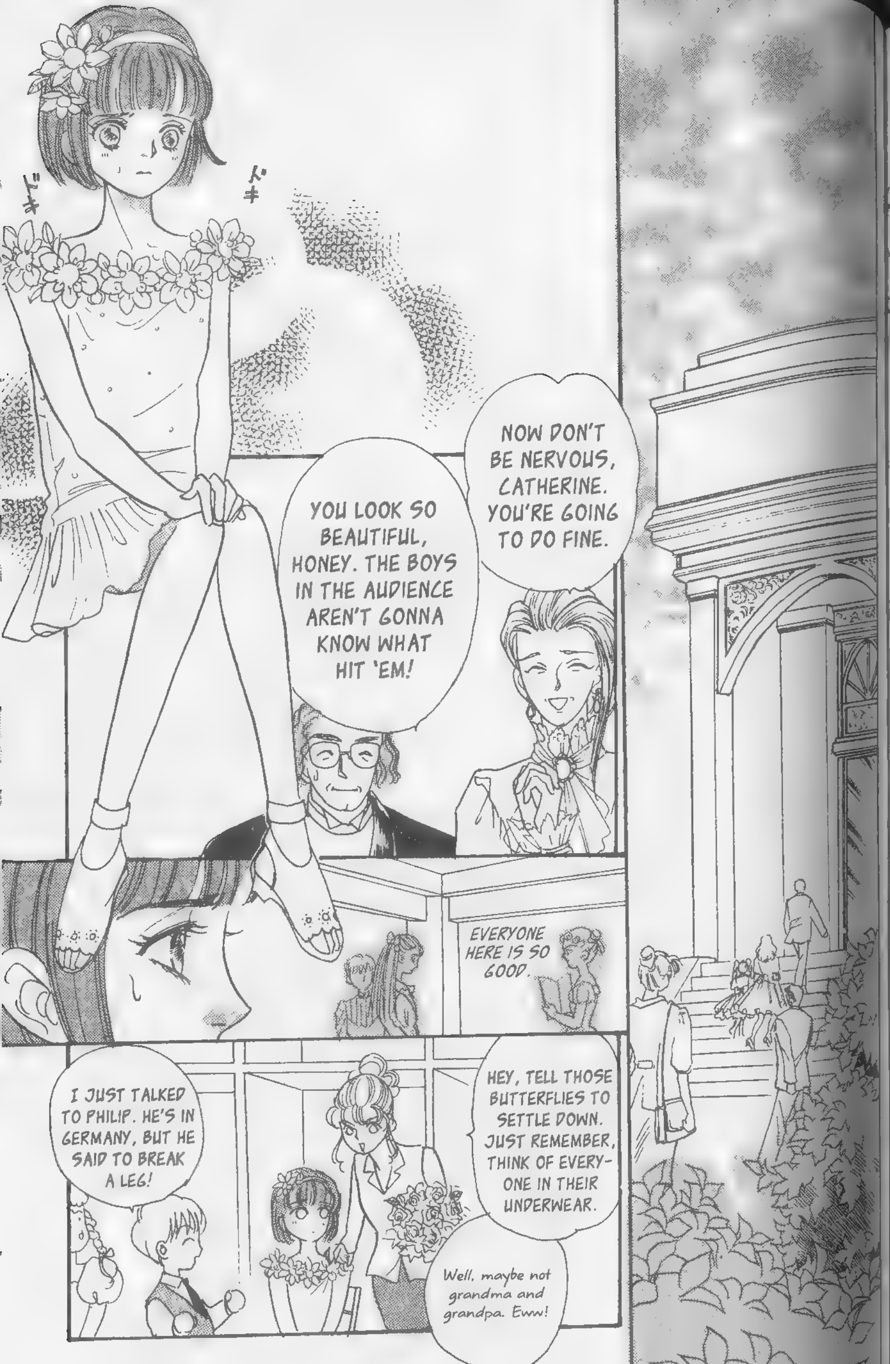

LOOK AT YOU! YOUR FIRST WALK. DO YOU LIKE IT, BLANCA?
SNIFF
BLANCA? WHAT'D YOU FIND?
HUH...
THAT WOULD BE OURS!
Sorry!
SHE'S IN OUR GYM CLASS, ISN'T SHE?
OH YEAH, IT'S CATHERINE.


HUH?
CATHERINE, WANNA PLAY?
THERE ARE THREE OF US. WITH YOU WE CAN PLAY DOUBLES.
WELL... I...
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! YOU'RE NOT ABLE TO PLAY, RIGHT?
......
THAT'S RIGHT, YOU'RE A WATCHER. WELL, FORGET IT THEN.
LET'S GO.
BLANCA...
UM, THE ONLY SPORTS I CAN'T PLAY ARE ONES THAT MIGHT JAM MY FINGERS.
BADMINTON DOESN'T DO THAT, SO...YEAH, I'LL PLAY!
YEAH? SWEET! OKAY, C'MON!
BLANCA, WAIT HERE.


DAMN, GIRL! YOU GOT ME AGAIN...
CATHERINE, IS THIS REALLY YOUR FIRST TIME PLAYING BADMINTON?
IF SO, THEN I'D SAY YOU'RE A NATURAL.
REALLY?!
W-WELL, I *HAVE* PLAYED BEFORE, BUT IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
STOP BEING SO MODEST.
HEY, CATHERINE...
WHY DON'T YOU JOIN OUR CLUB?
CLUB?


WE JUST STARTED IT RECENTLY. WE'RE TRYING TO GET MORE PEOPLE TO JOIN. WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU IN IT.
......
I'M SORRY, I...
I HAVE PIANO LESSONS EVERY DAY AFTER SCHOOL.
OH...
I NEED TO GET HOME.
COME ON, BLANCA.


SORRY, NOT INTERESTED.
BUT IT'S CATHERINE'S DEBUT.
THIS RECITAL IS CRUCIAL FOR CATHERINE. IF SHE DOES WELL, SHE'S ON HER WAY TO GAINING ACCEPTANCE INTO JULLIARD'S MUSIC PROGRAM.
JULLIARD? ISN'T THAT ONE OF THOSE ORANGE DRINKS YOU GET AT THE MALL?
THAT'S JULIUS, YOU IDIOT. I CAN SEE THERE'S NO CONVINCING YOU.
COME ON, CHRIS. LET'S GO.
HEY, HOLD UP!
THE LAST TIME THAT D DRAGGED ME TO ONE OF THESE ARTSY-FARTSY CULTURAL THINGS, A WORLD-FAMOUS BALLERINA--WHO, COINCIDENTALLY, HAD PAID A VISIT TO D'S SHOP EARLIER THAT DAY...
...DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE. THAT WAS BAD ENOUGH...
...BUT THIS TIME IT'S JUST A LITTLE GIRL.
ON SECOND THOUGHT...
BYE!
...CHRIS IS WITH HIM. I'M SURE IT WILL BE FINE.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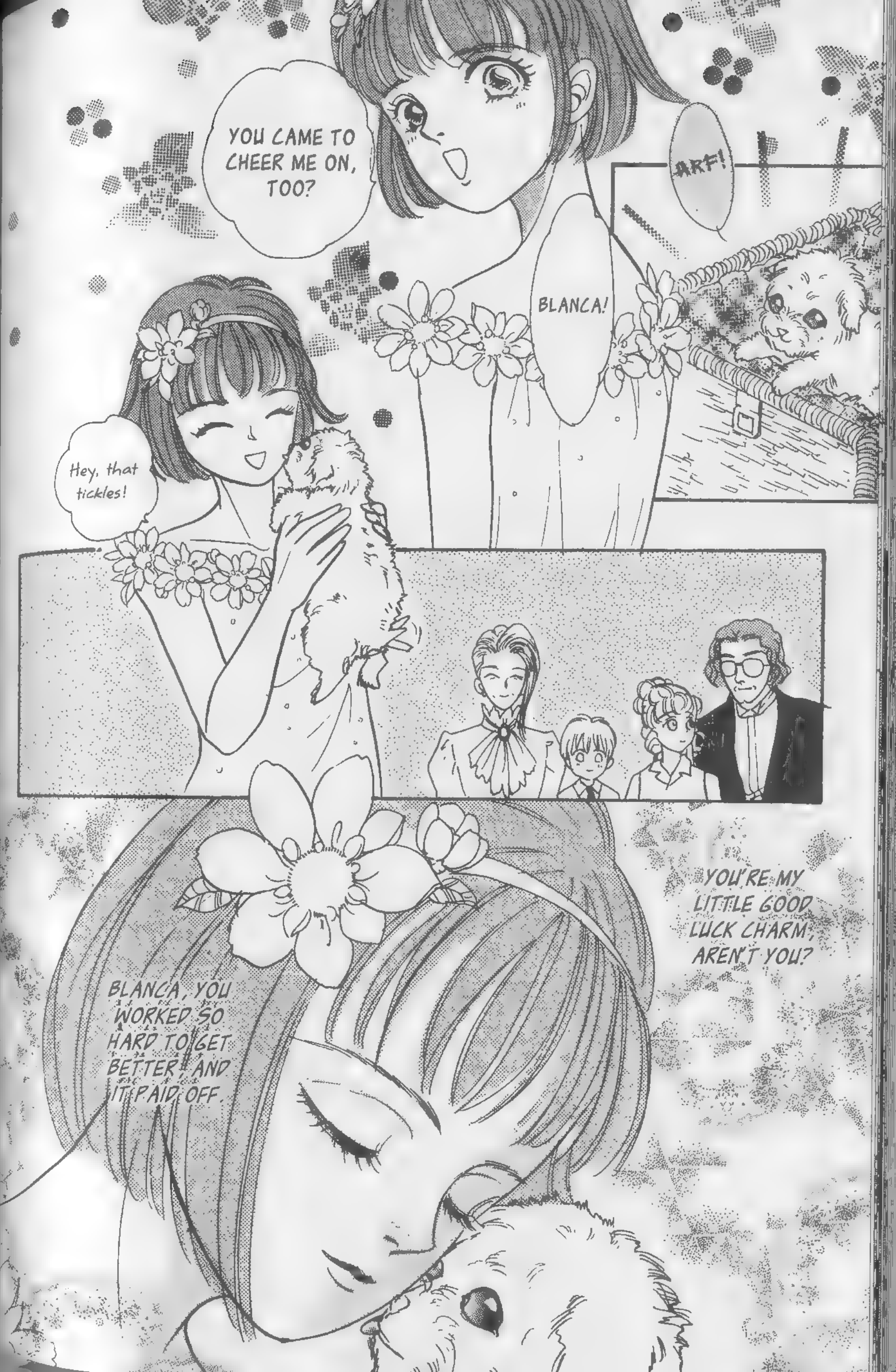
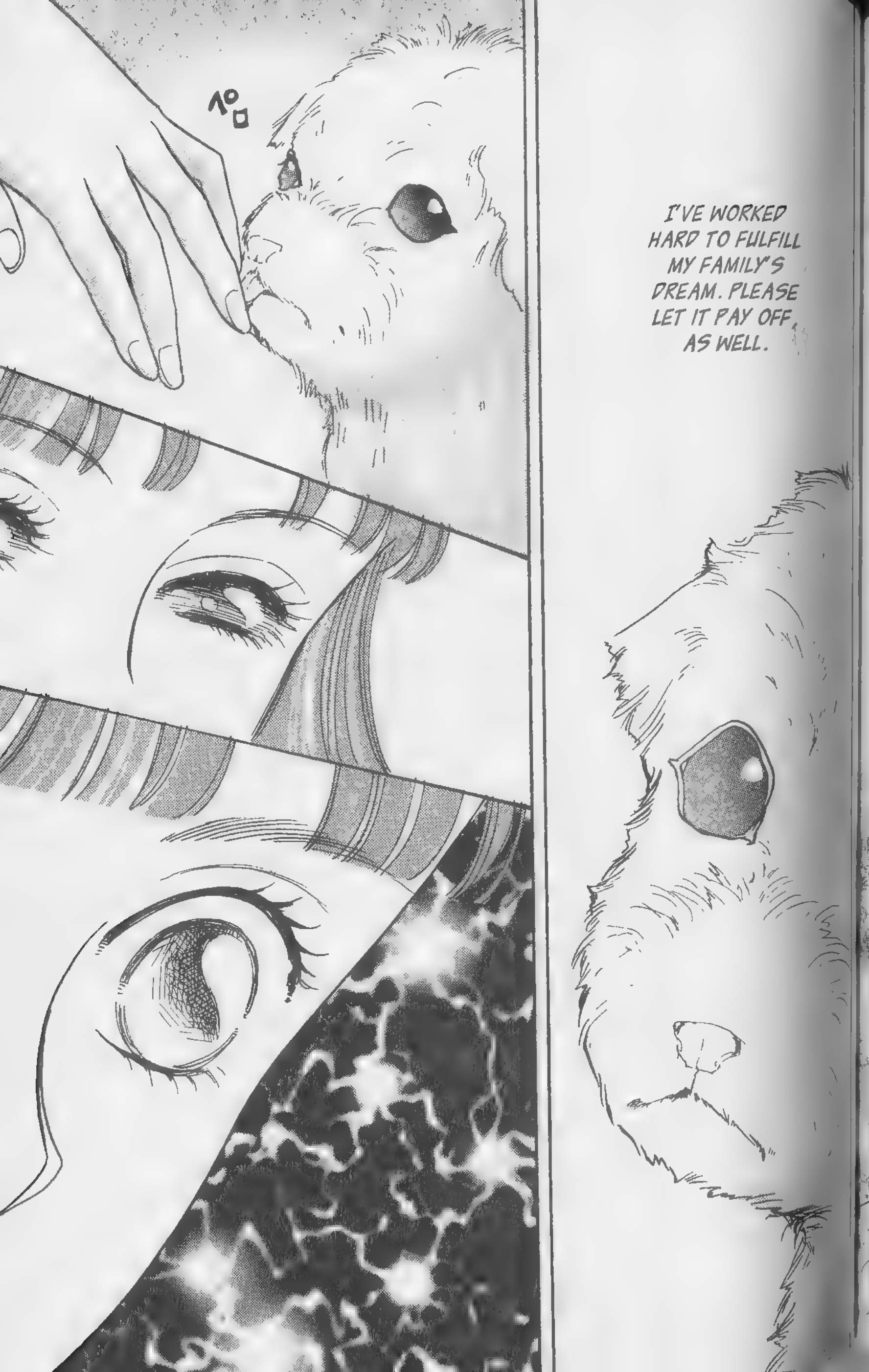
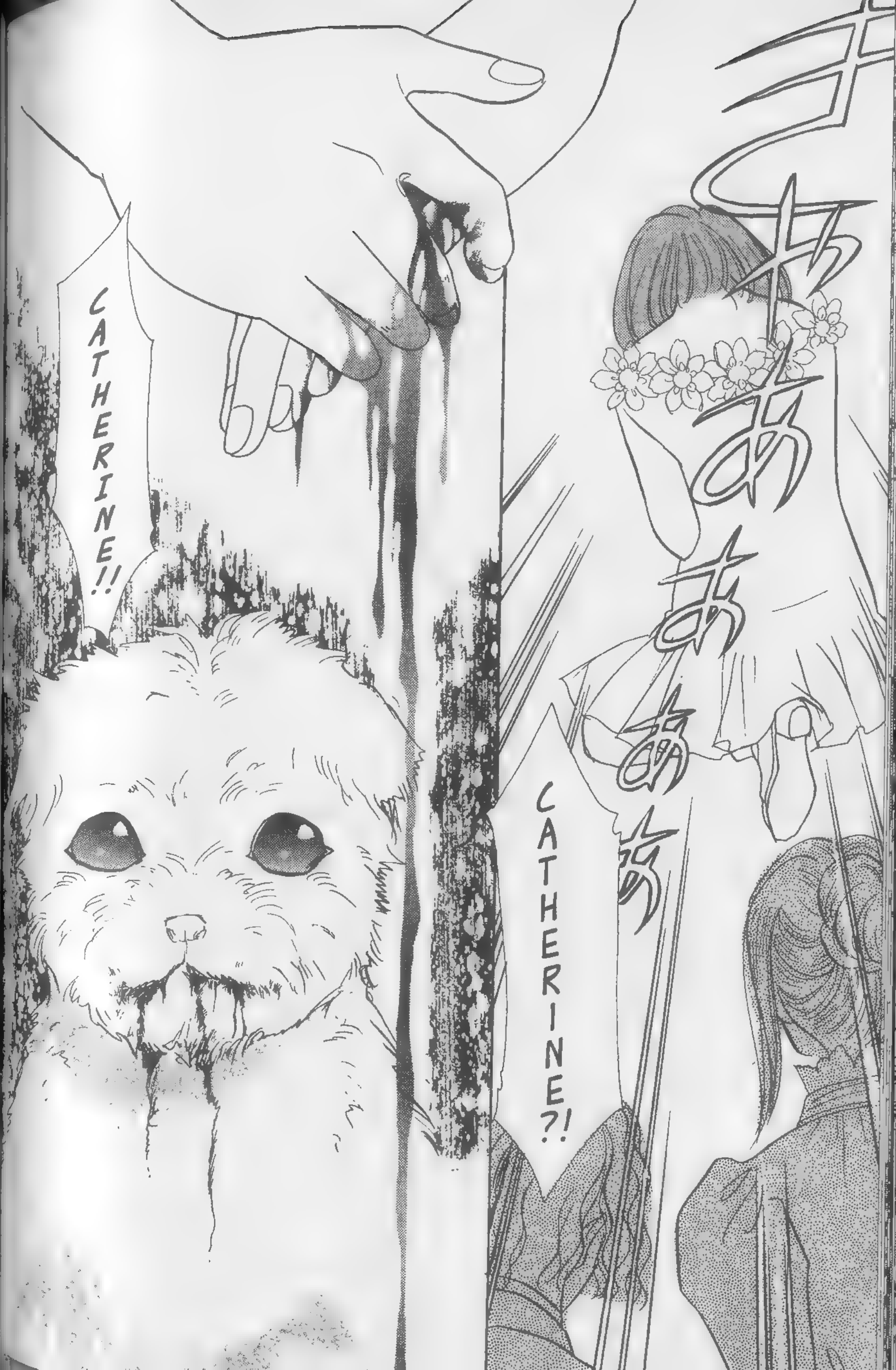
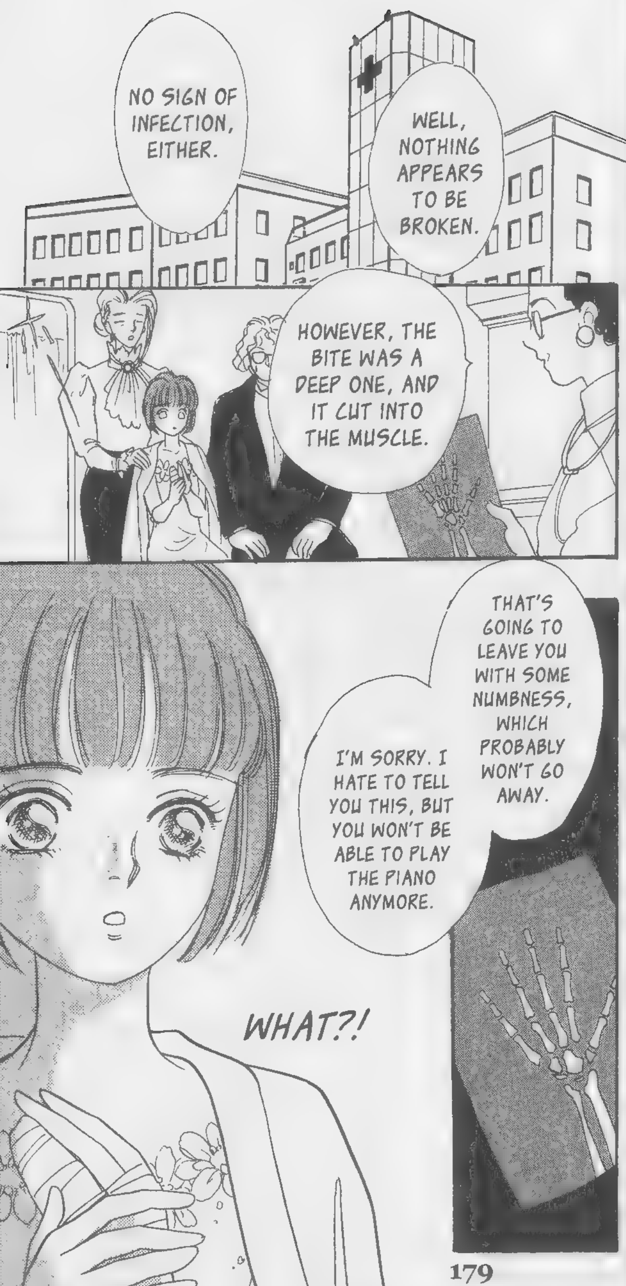
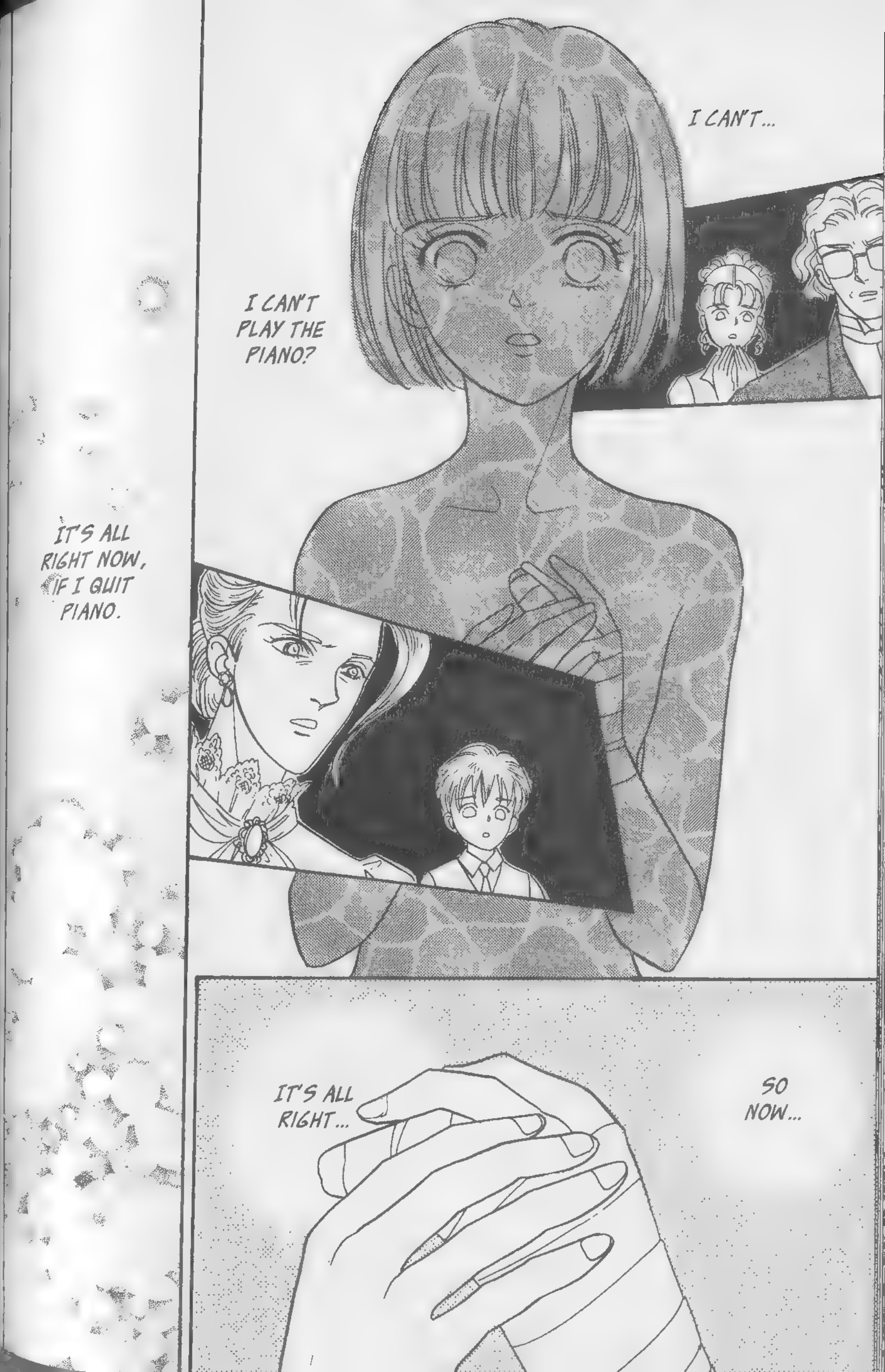
NOW DON'T BE NERVOUS, CATHERINE. YOU'RE GOING TO DO FINE.
YOU LOOK SO BEAUTIFUL, HONEY. THE BOYS IN THE AUDIENCE AREN'T GONNA KNOW WHAT HIT 'EM!
EVERYONE HERE IS SO GOOD.
HEY, TELL THOSE BUTTERFLIES TO SETTLE DOWN. JUST REMEMBER, THINK OF EVERYONE IN THEIR UNDERWEAR.
Well, maybe not grandma and grandpa. Eww!
I JUST TALKED TO PHILIP. HE'S IN GERMANY, BUT HE SAID TO BREAK A LEG!

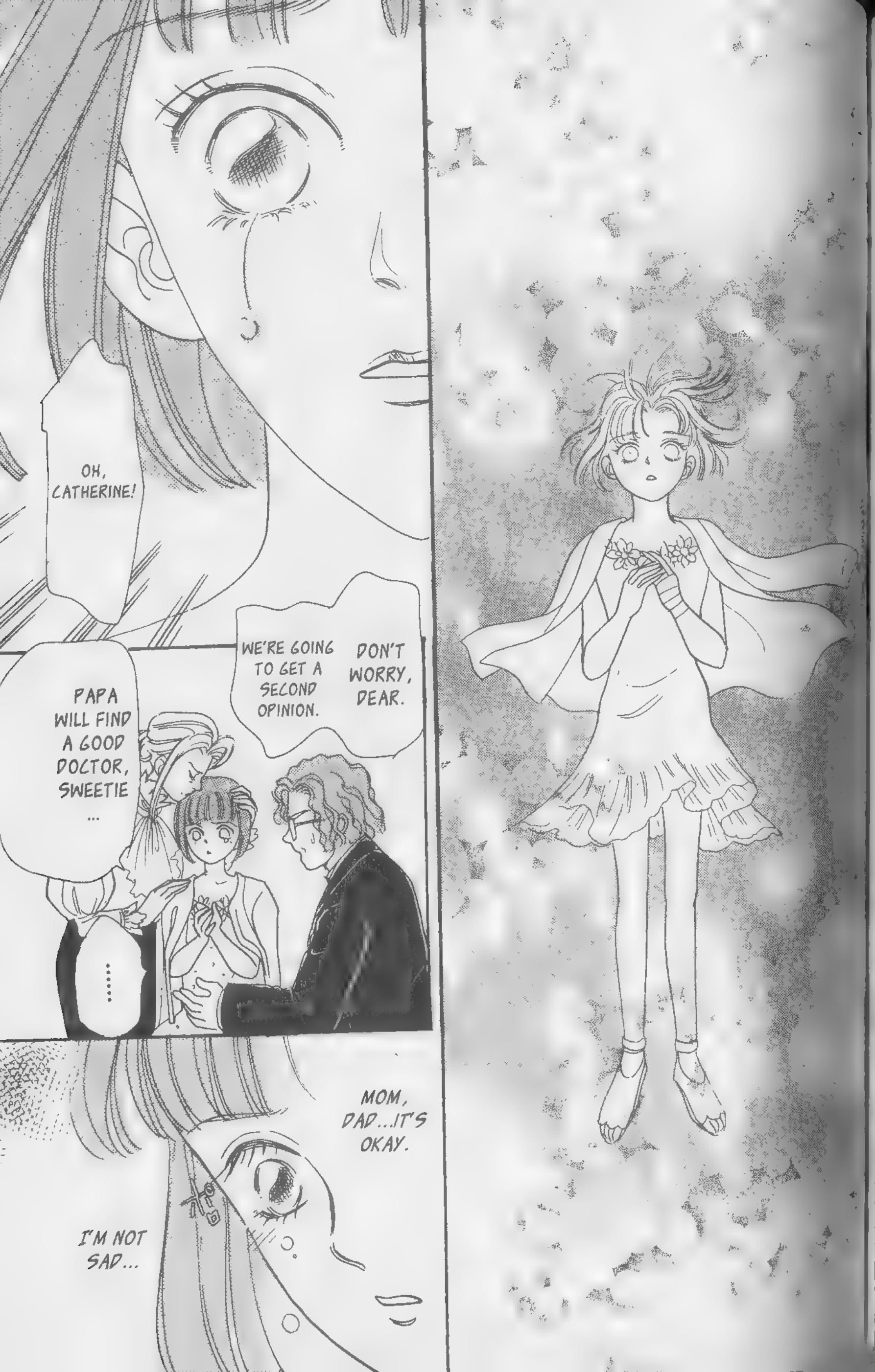

ARF!
BLANCA!
YOU CAME TO CHEER ME ON, TOO?
Hey, that tickles!
YOU'RE MY LITTLE GOOD LUCK CHARM, AREN'T YOU?
BLANCA, YOU WORKED SO HARD TO GET BETTER, AND IT PAID OFF.

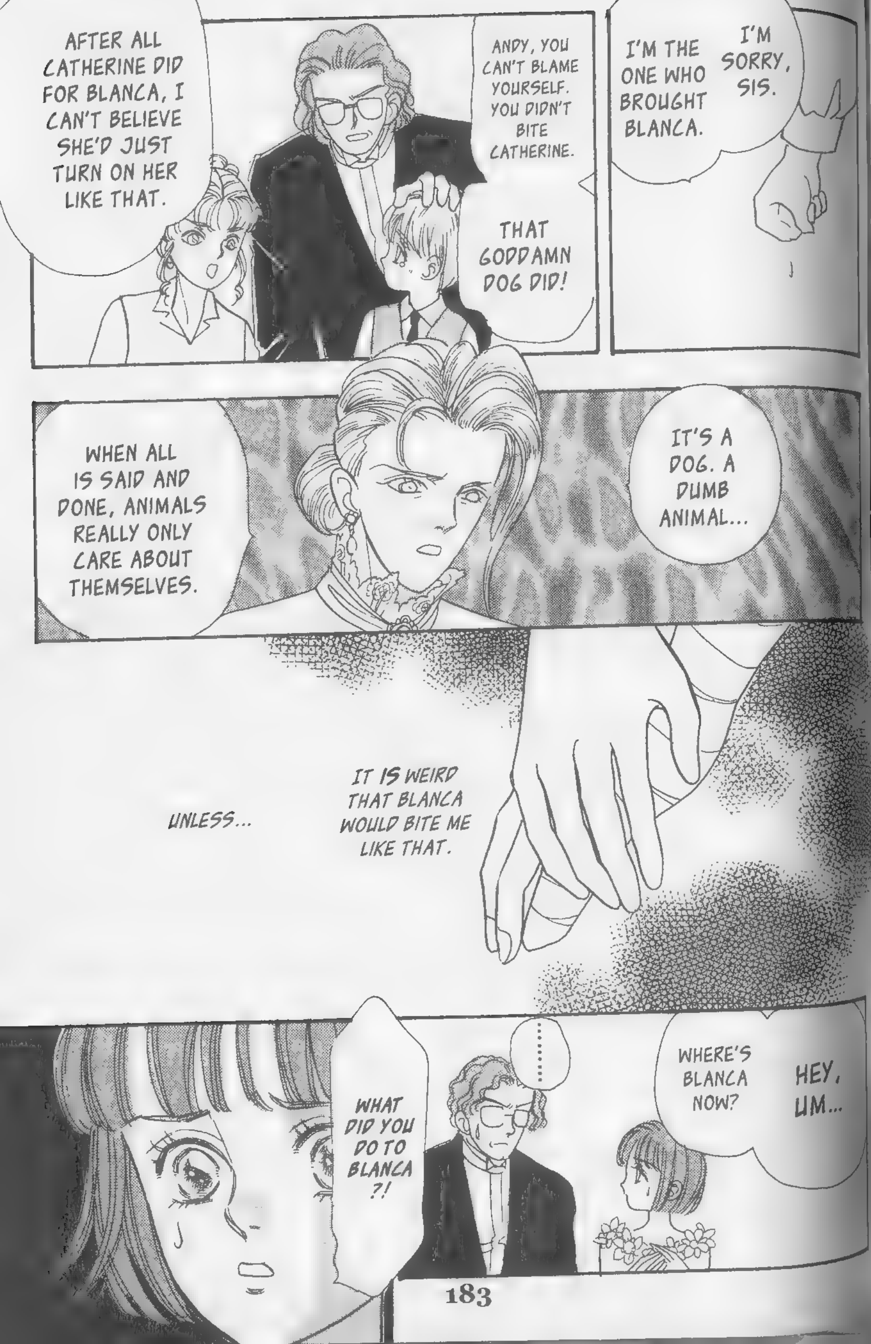

I'VE WORKED HARD TO FULFILL MY FAMILY'S DREAM. PLEASE LET IT PAY OFF, AS WELL.
ペロ

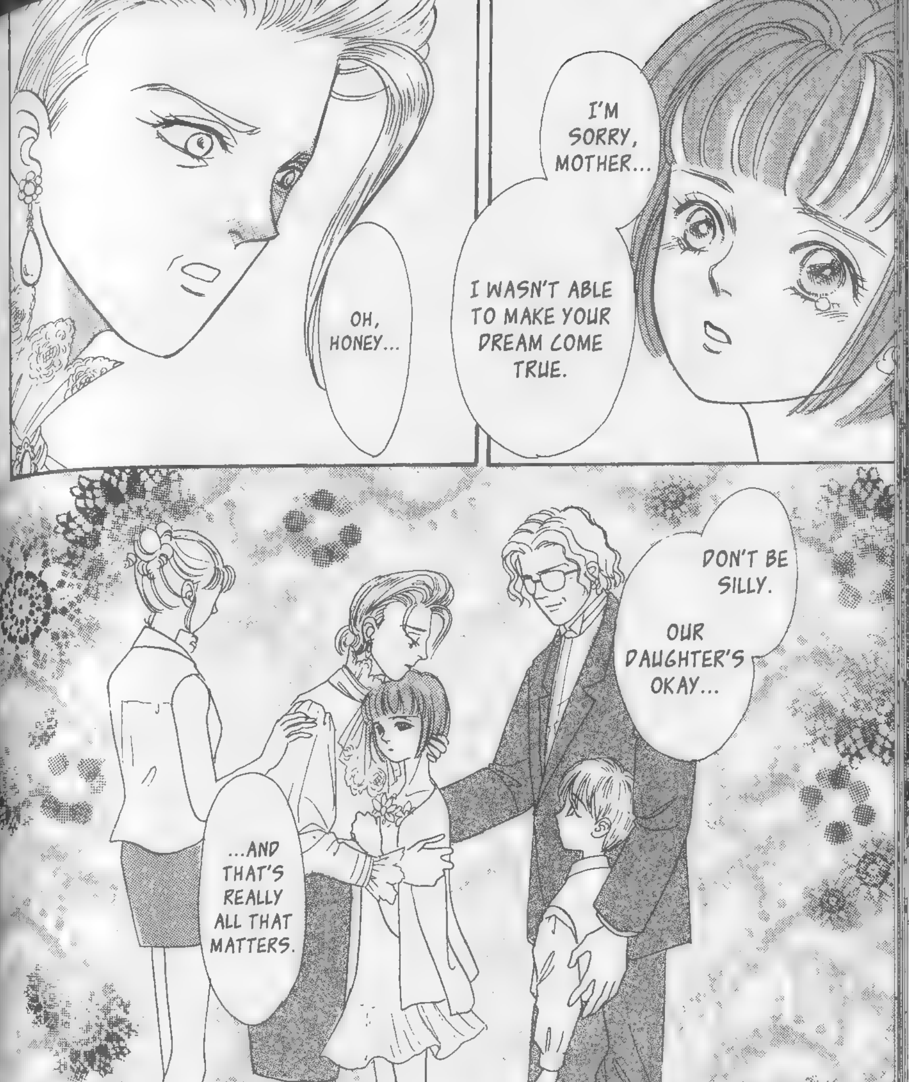

きゃああああああ
CATHERINE?!
CATHERINE!!

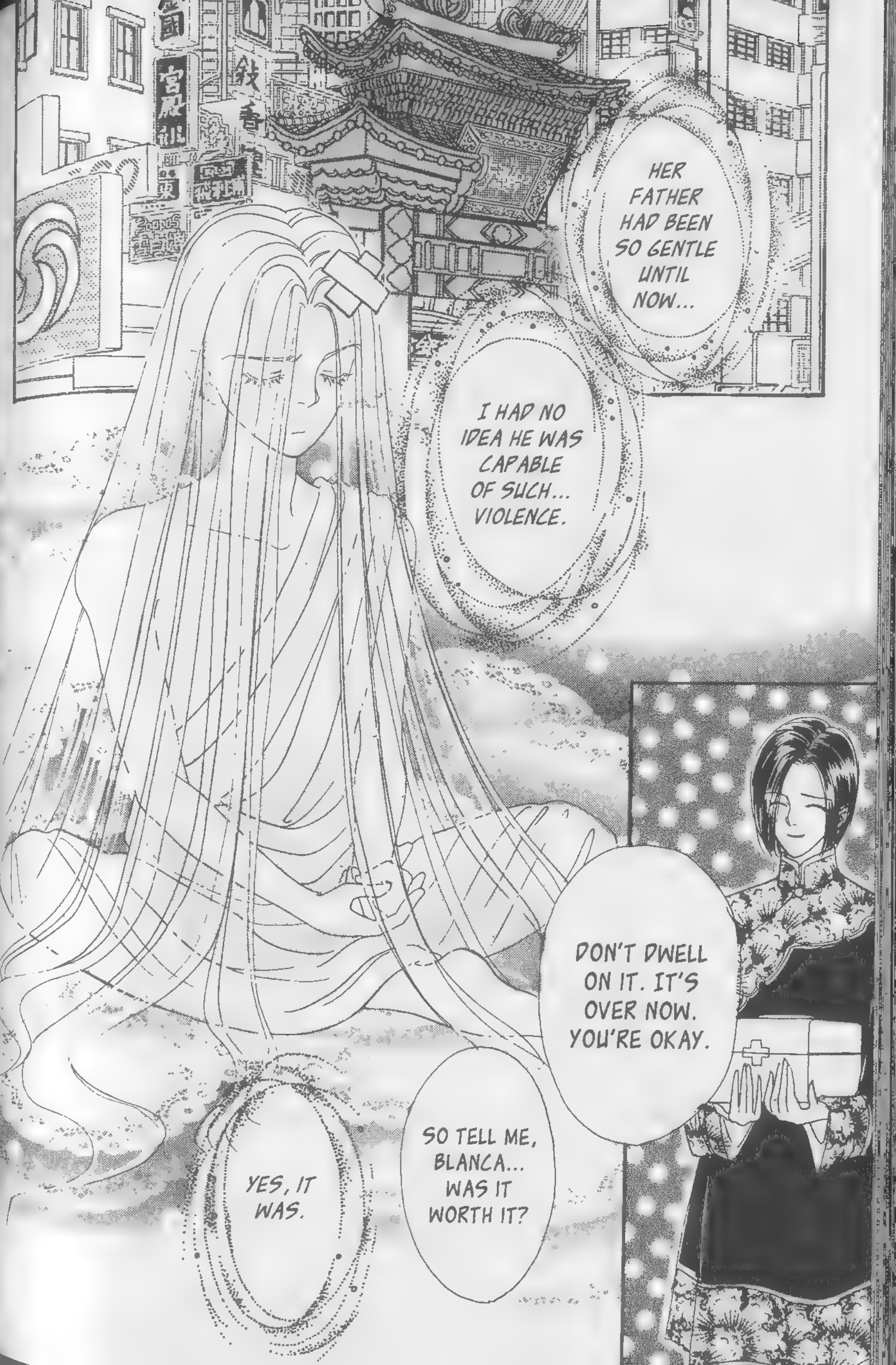

WELL, NOTHING APPEARS TO BE BROKEN.
NO SIGN OF INFECTION, EITHER.
HOWEVER, THE BITE WAS A DEEP ONE, AND IT CUT INTO THE MUSCLE.
THAT'S GOING TO LEAVE YOU WITH SOME NUMBNESS, WHICH PROBABLY WON'T GO AWAY.
I'M SORRY. I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO PLAY THE PIANO ANYMORE.
WHAT?!

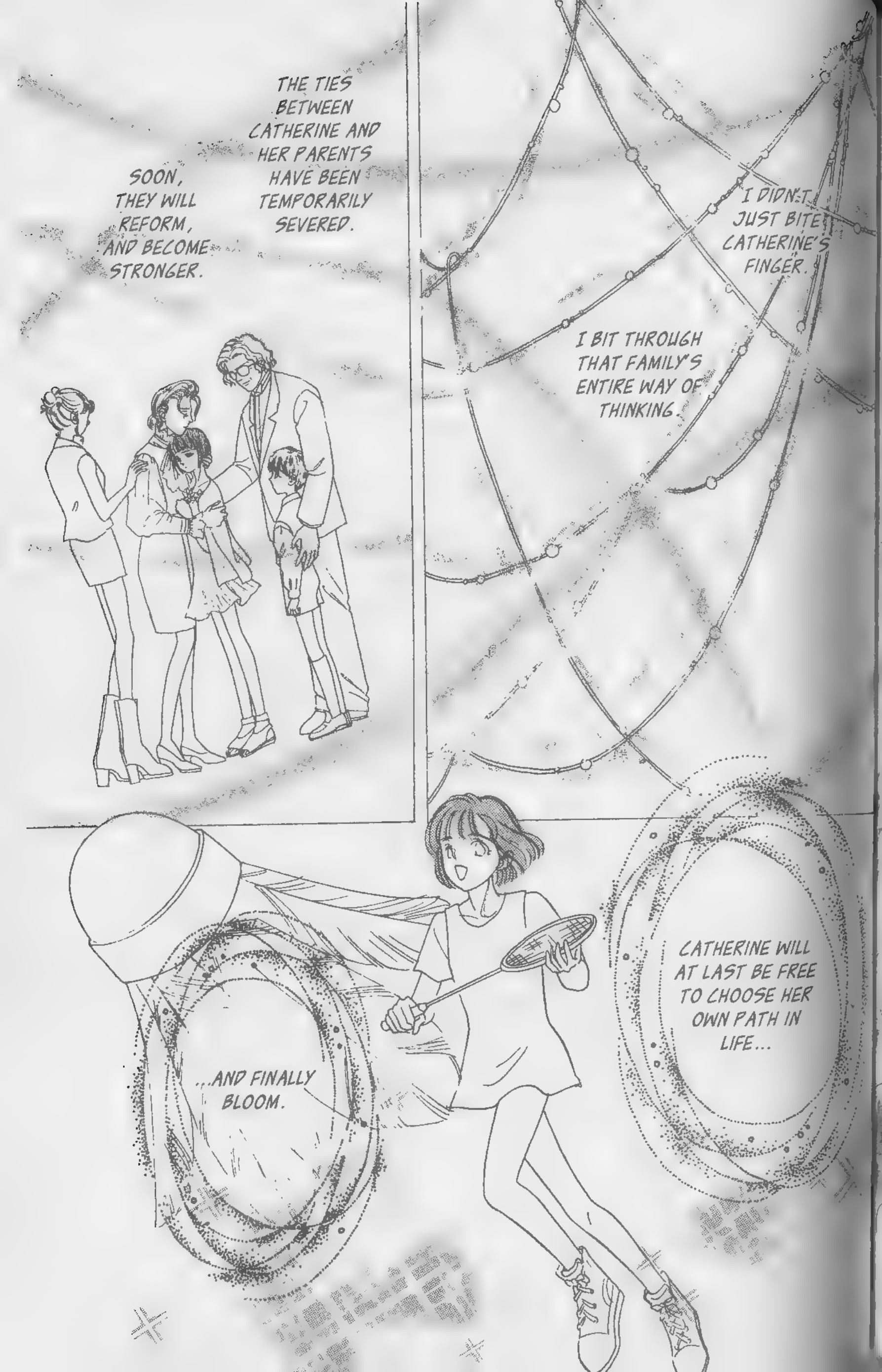

I CAN'T...
I CAN'T PLAY THE PIANO?
SO NOW...
IT'S ALL RIGHT...
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW, IF I QUIT PIANO.

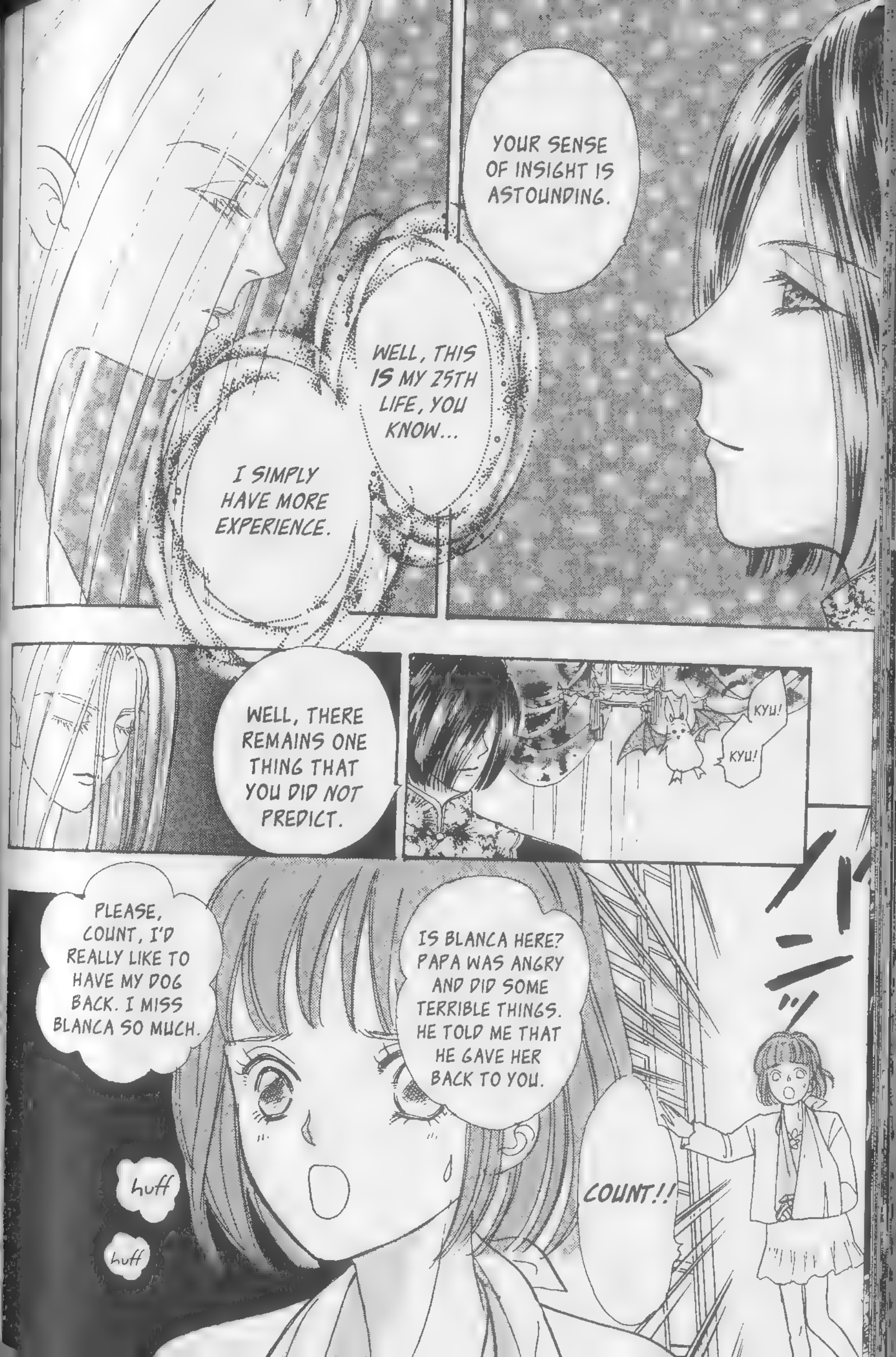

OH, CATHERINE!
DON'T WORRY, DEAR.
WE'RE GOING TO GET A SECOND OPINION.
PAPA WILL FIND A GOOD DOCTOR, SWEETIE ...
......
MOM, DAD...IT'S OKAY.
I'M NOT SAD...

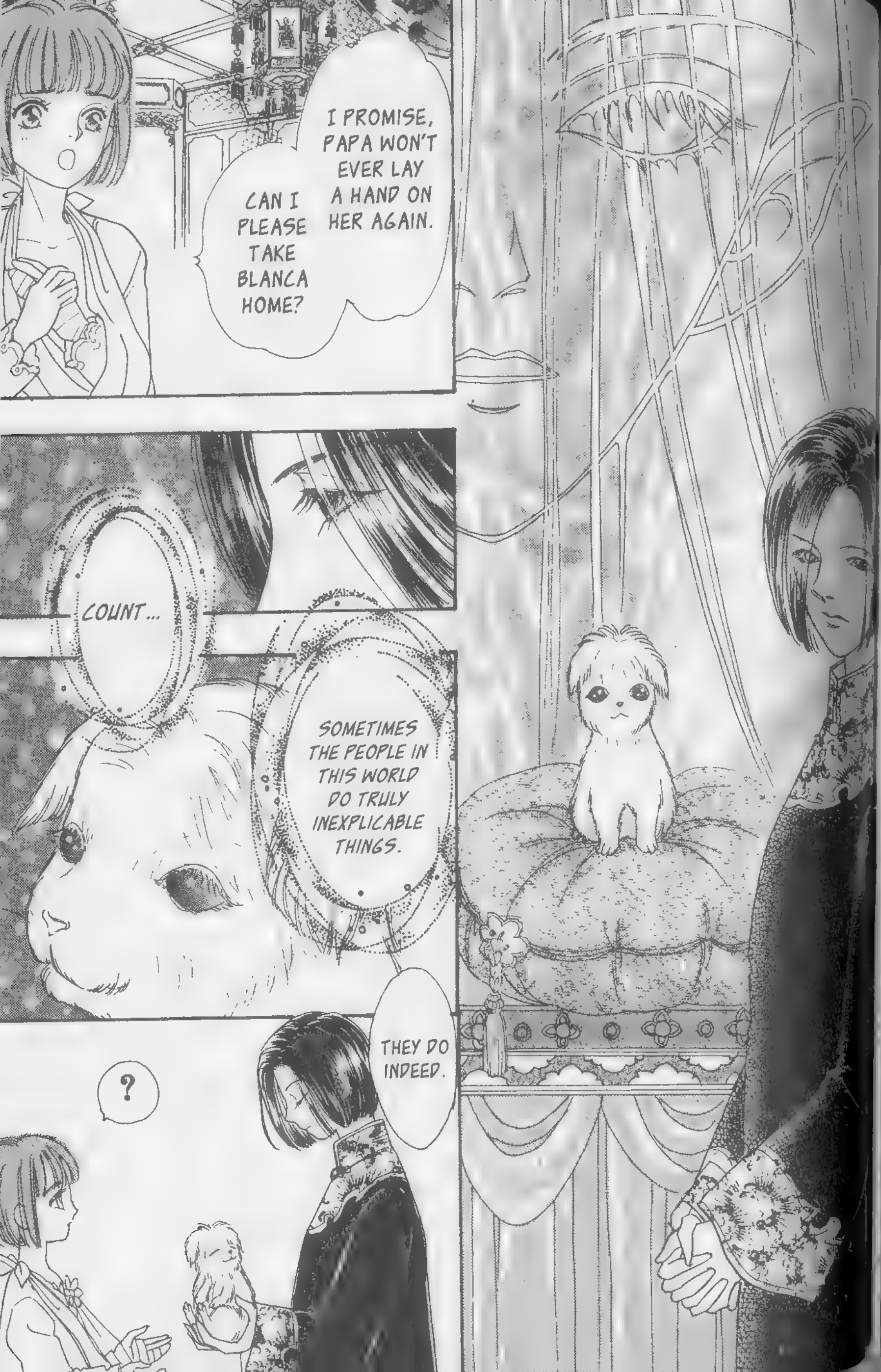

I'M SORRY, SIS.
I'M THE ONE WHO BROUGHT BLANCA.
ANDY, YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF. YOU DIDN'T BITE CATHERINE.
THAT GODDAMN DOG DID!
AFTER ALL CATHERINE DID FOR BLANCA, I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE'D JUST TURN ON HER LIKE THAT.
IT'S A DOG. A DUMB ANIMAL...
WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, ANIMALS REALLY ONLY CARE ABOUT THEMSELVES.
IT IS WEIRD THAT BLANCA WOULD BITE ME LIKE THAT.
UNLESS...
HEY, UM...
WHERE'S BLANCA NOW?
......
WHAT DID YOU DO TO BLANCA?!

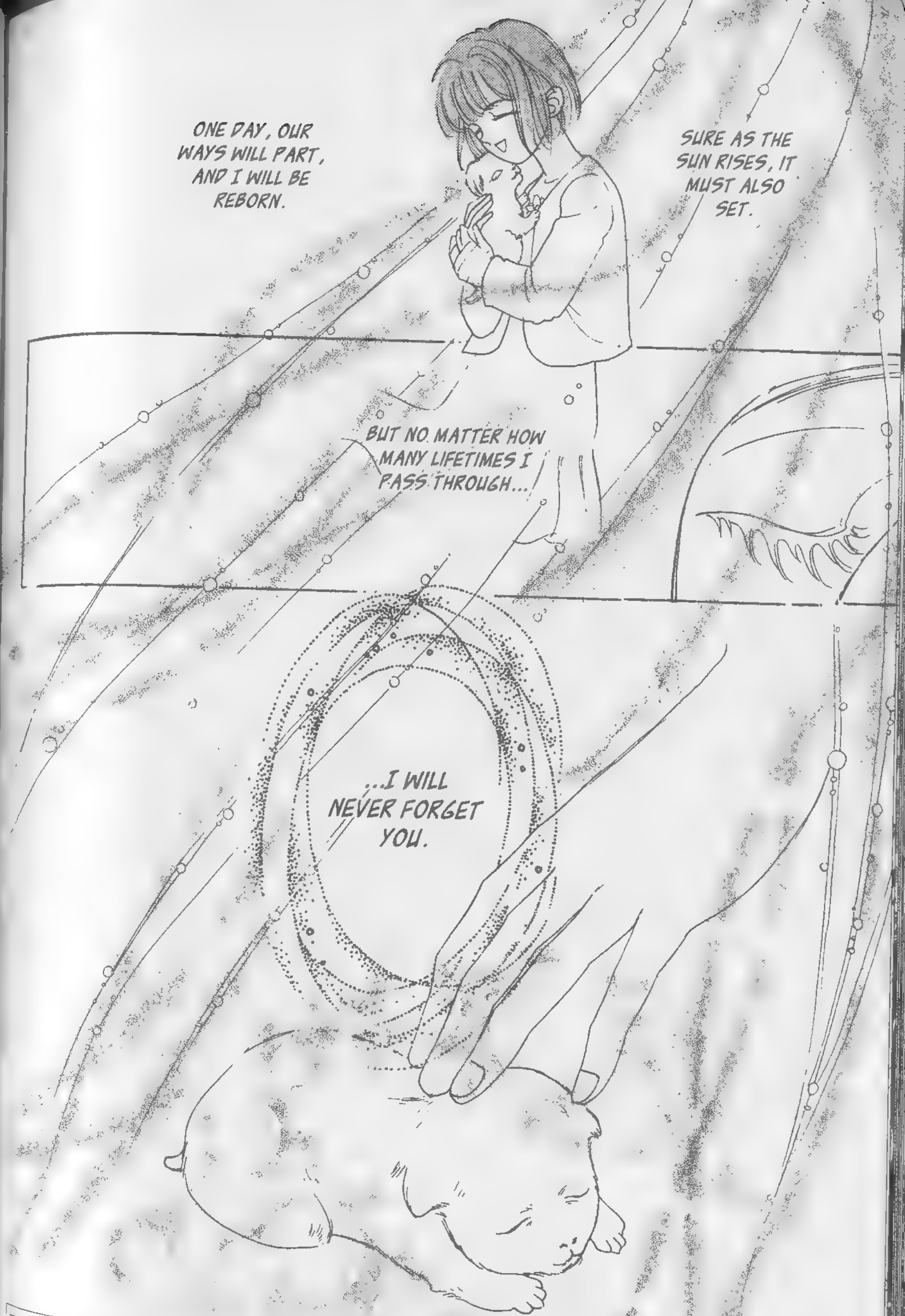

I'M SORRY, MOTHER...
I WASN'T ABLE TO MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE.
OH, HONEY...
DON'T BE SILLY.
OUR DAUGHTER'S OKAY...
...AND THAT'S REALLY ALL THAT MATTERS.


HER FATHER HAD BEEN SO GENTLE UNTIL NOW...
I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS CAPABLE OF SUCH... VIOLENCE.
DON'T DWELL ON IT. IT'S OVER NOW. YOU'RE OKAY.
SO TELL ME, BLANCA... WAS IT WORTH IT?
YES, IT WAS.

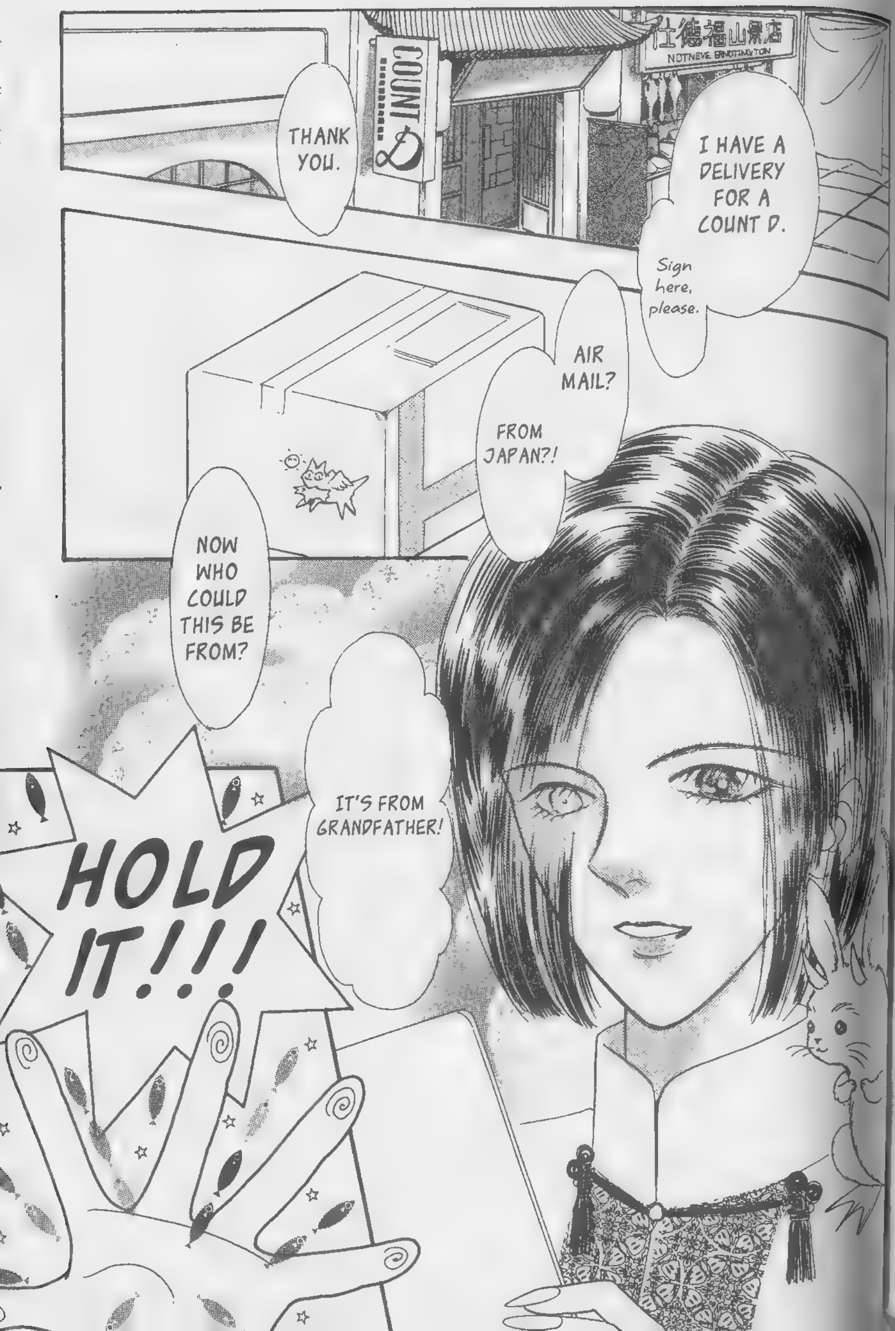

I DIDN'T JUST BITE CATHERINE'S FINGER.
I BIT THROUGH THAT FAMILY'S ENTIRE WAY OF THINKING.
THE TIES BETWEEN CATHERINE AND HER PARENTS HAVE BEEN TEMPORARILY SEVERED.
SOON, THEY WILL REFORM, AND BECOME STRONGER.
CATHERINE WILL AT LAST BE FREE TO CHOOSE HER OWN PATH IN LIFE...
...AND FINALLY BLOOM.

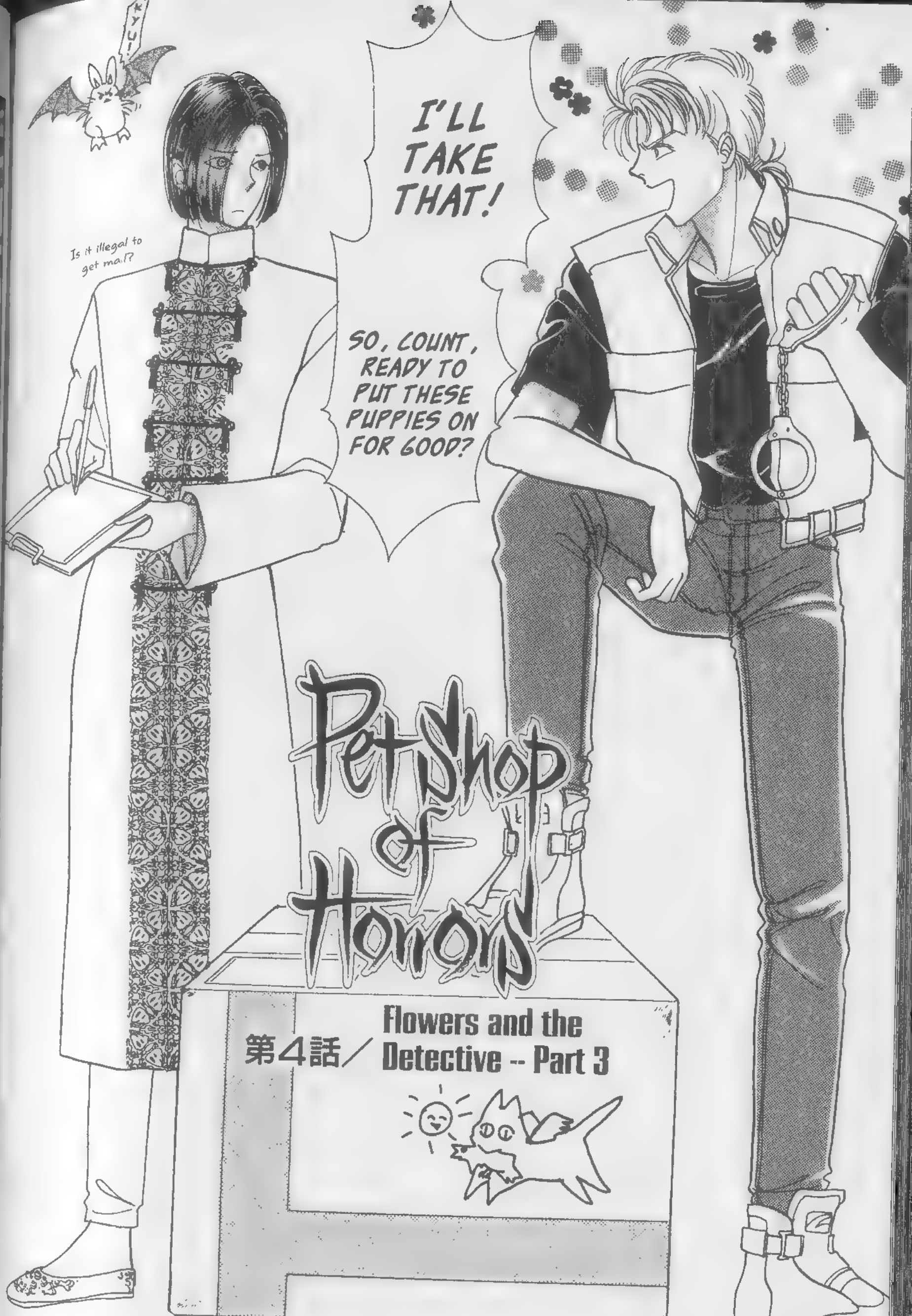

YOUR SENSE OF INSIGHT IS ASTOUNDING.
WELL, THIS IS MY 25TH LIFE, YOU KNOW...
I SIMPLY HAVE MORE EXPERIENCE.
KYU!
KYU!
WELL, THERE REMAINS ONE THING THAT YOU DID NOT PREDICT.
COUNT!!
IS BLANCA HERE? PAPA WAS ANGRY AND DID SOME TERRIBLE THINGS. HE TOLD ME THAT HE GAVE HER BACK TO YOU.
PLEASE, COUNT, I'D REALLY LIKE TO HAVE MY DOG BACK. I MISS BLANCA SO MUCH.
huff
huff


I PROMISE, PAPA WON'T EVER LAY A HAND ON HER AGAIN.
CAN I PLEASE TAKE BLANCA HOME?
COUNT...
SOMETIMES THE PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD DO TRULY INEXPLICABLE THINGS.
THEY DO INDEED.
?

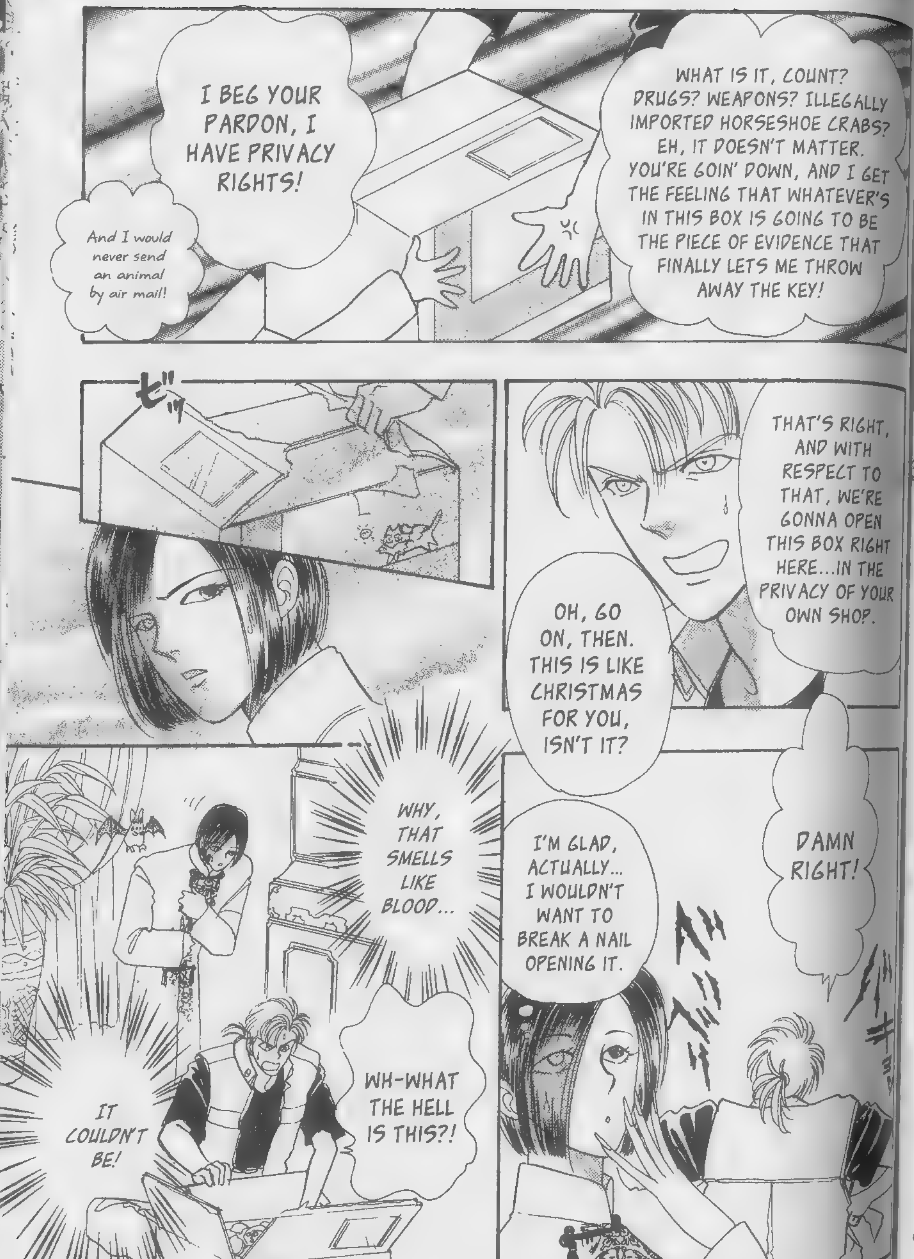

SURE AS THE SUN RISES, IT MUST ALSO SET.
ONE DAY, OUR WAYS WILL PART, AND I WILL BE REBORN.
BUT NO MATTER HOW MANY LIFETIMES I PASS THROUGH...
...I WILL NEVER FORGET YOU.

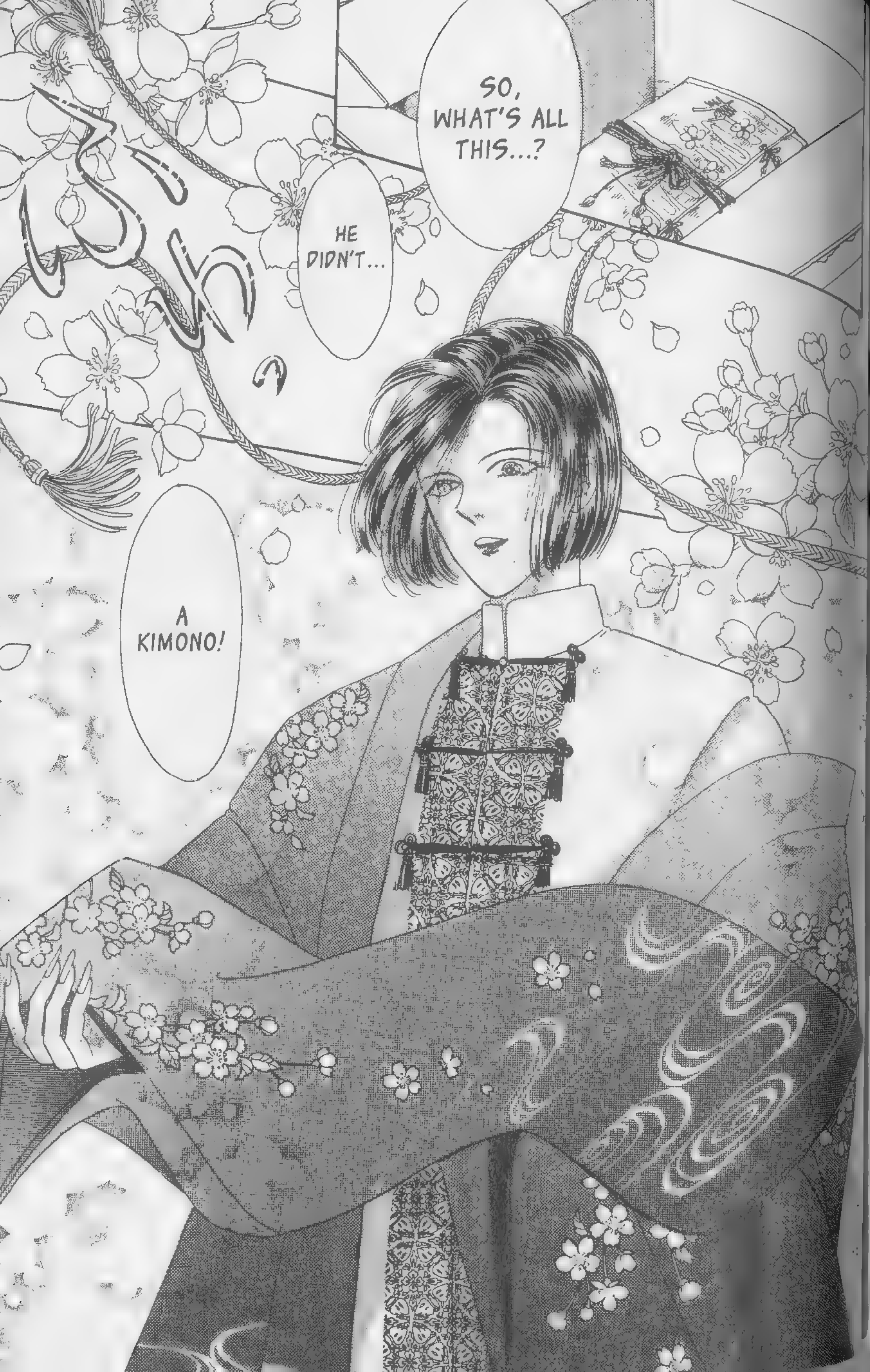
End of Episode 3

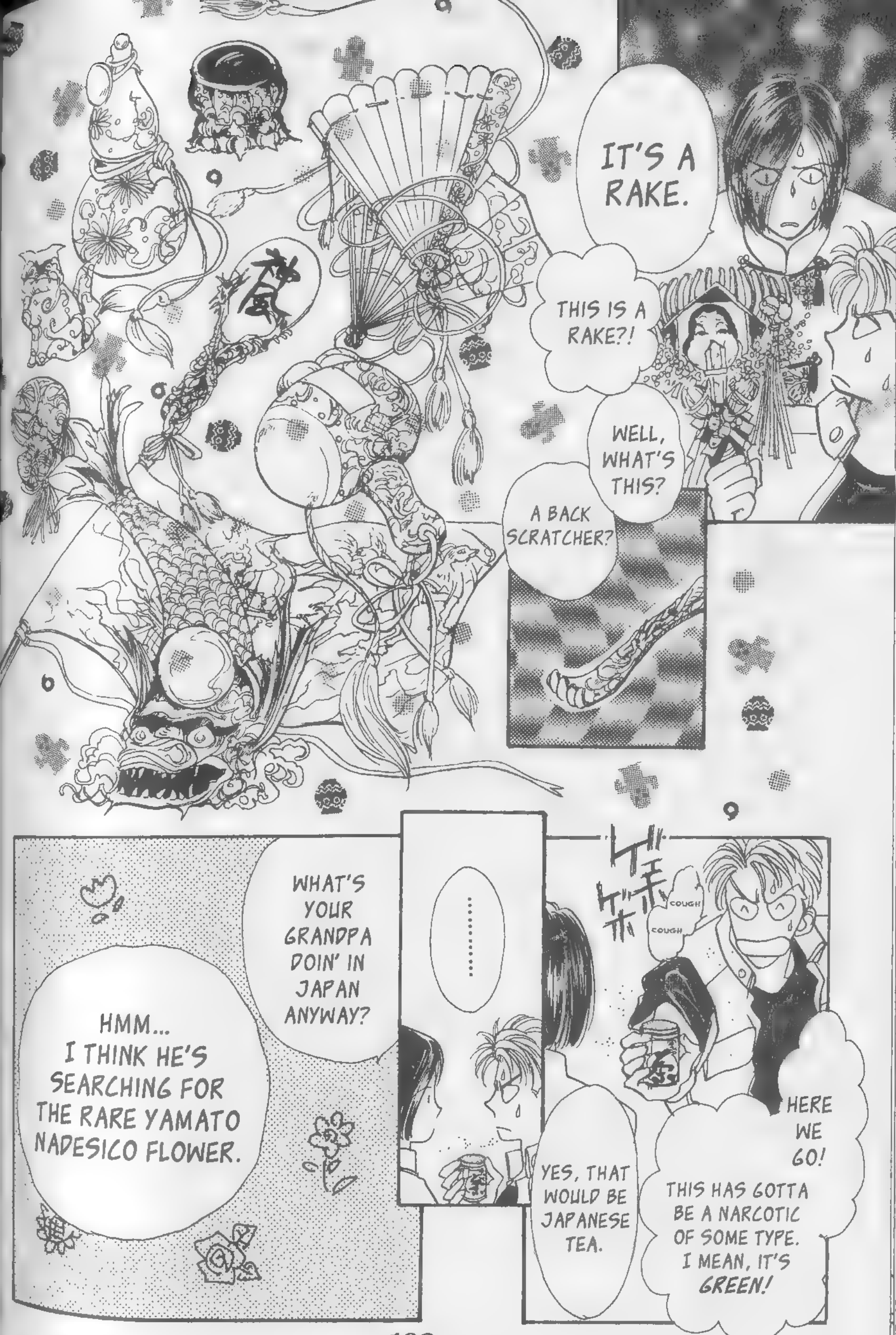

COUNT D
I HAVE A DELIVERY FOR A COUNT D.
Sign here, please.
THANK YOU.
AIR MAIL?
FROM JAPAN?!
NOW WHO COULD THIS BE FROM?
IT'S FROM GRANDFATHER!
HOLD IT!!!

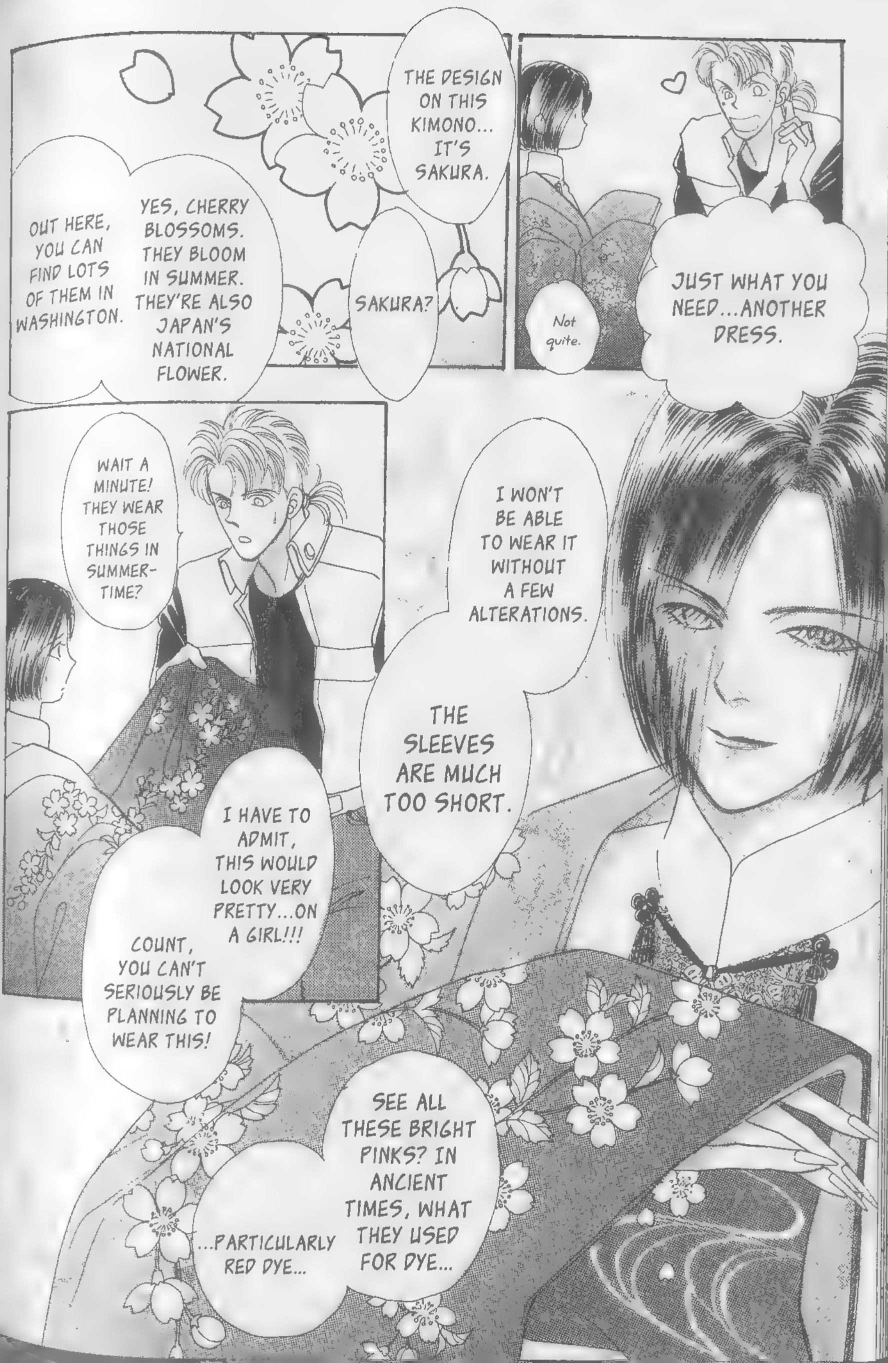

I'LL TAKE THAT!
SO, COUNT, READY TO PUT THESE PUPPIES ON FOR GOOD?
KYU!
Is it illegal to get mail?
Pet Shop of Horrors

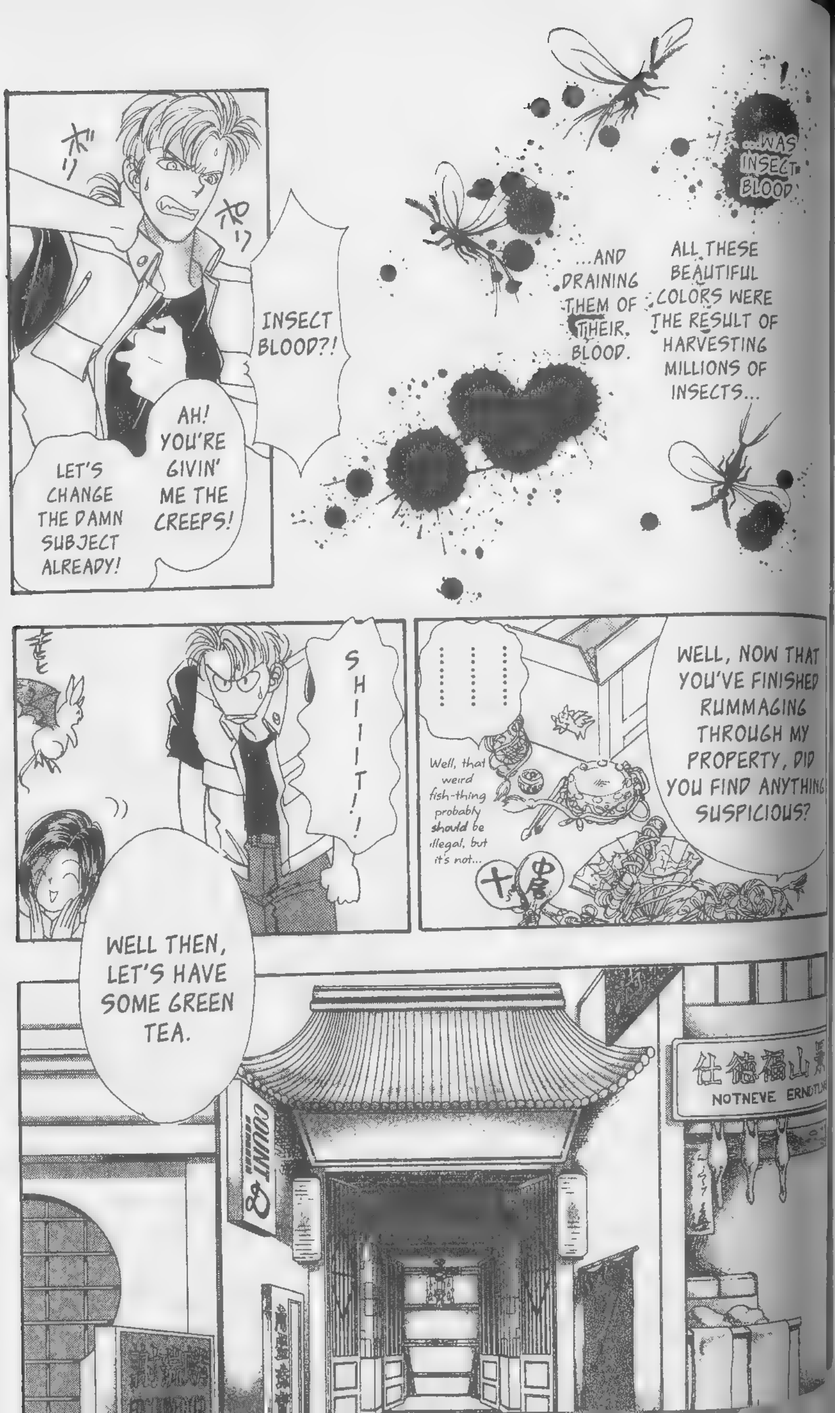
第4話／ Flowers and the Detective -- Part 3

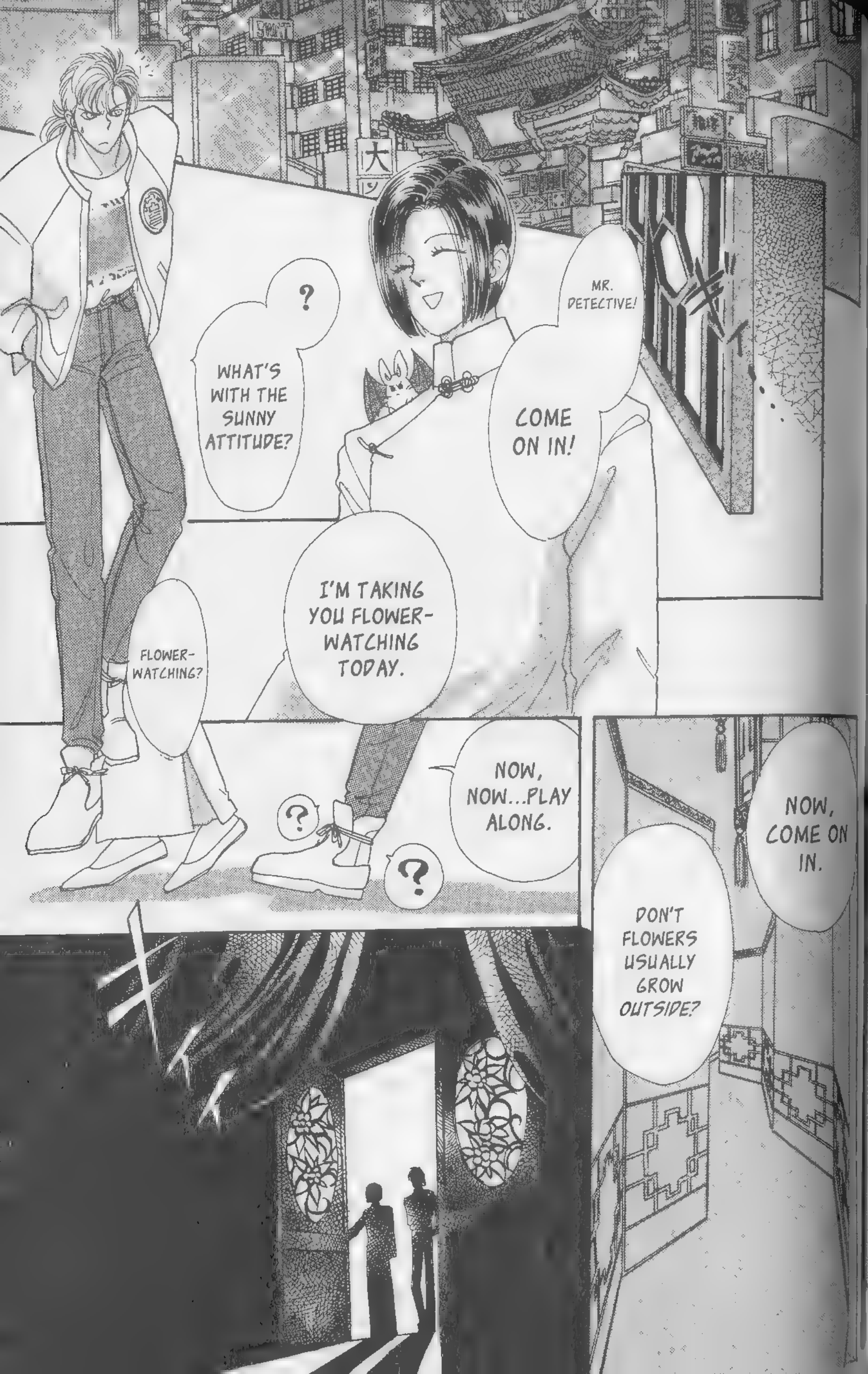

WHAT IS IT, COUNT? DRUGS? WEAPONS? ILLEGALLY IMPORTED HORSESHOE CRABS? EH, IT DOESN'T MATTER. YOU'RE GOIN' DOWN, AND I GET THE FEELING THAT WHATEVER'S IN THIS BOX IS GOING TO BE THE PIECE OF EVIDENCE THAT FINALLY LETS ME THROW AWAY THE KEY!
I BEG YOUR PARDON, I HAVE PRIVACY RIGHTS!
And I would never send an animal by air mail!
THAT'S RIGHT, AND WITH RESPECT TO THAT, WE'RE GONNA OPEN THIS BOX RIGHT HERE...IN THE PRIVACY OF YOUR OWN SHOP.
OH, GO ON, THEN. THIS IS LIKE CHRISTMAS FOR YOU, ISN'T IT?
ビッ
DAMN RIGHT!
I'M GLAD, ACTUALLY... I WOULDN'T WANT TO BREAK A NAIL OPENING IT.
WHY, THAT SMELLS LIKE BLOOD...
WH-WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!
IT COULDN'T BE!

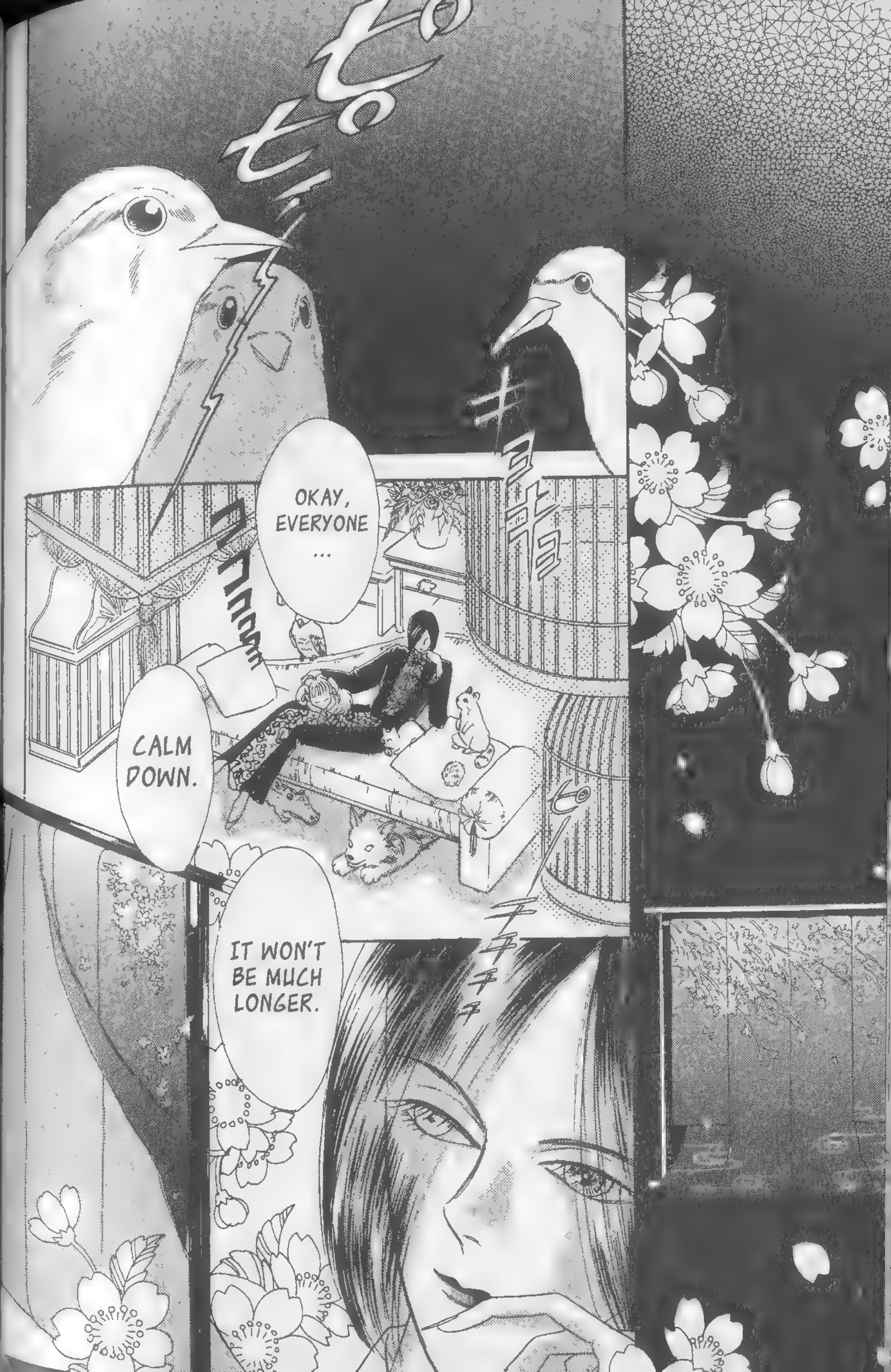

SO, WHAT'S ALL THIS...?
HE DIDN'T...
A KIMONO!

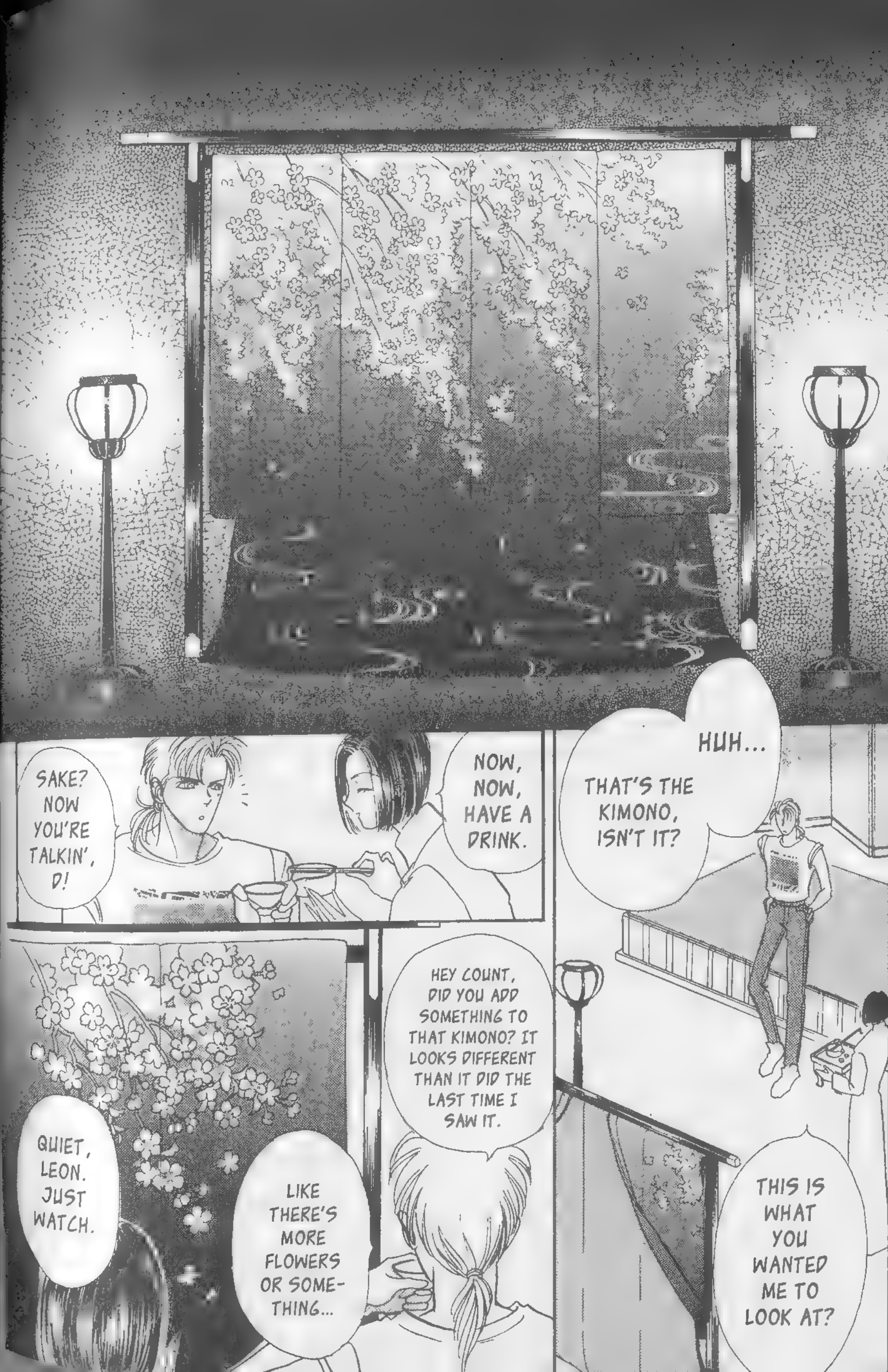

IT'S A RAKE.
THIS IS A RAKE?!
WELL, WHAT'S THIS?
A BACK SCRATCHER?
ゲホ ゲホ
COUGH
COUGH
HERE WE GO!
THIS HAS GOTTA BE A NARCOTIC OF SOME TYPE. I MEAN, IT'S *GREEN!*
YES, THAT WOULD BE JAPANESE TEA.
....
WHAT'S YOUR GRANDPA DOIN' IN JAPAN ANYWAY?
HMM... I THINK HE'S SEARCHING FOR THE RARE YAMATO NADESICO FLOWER.

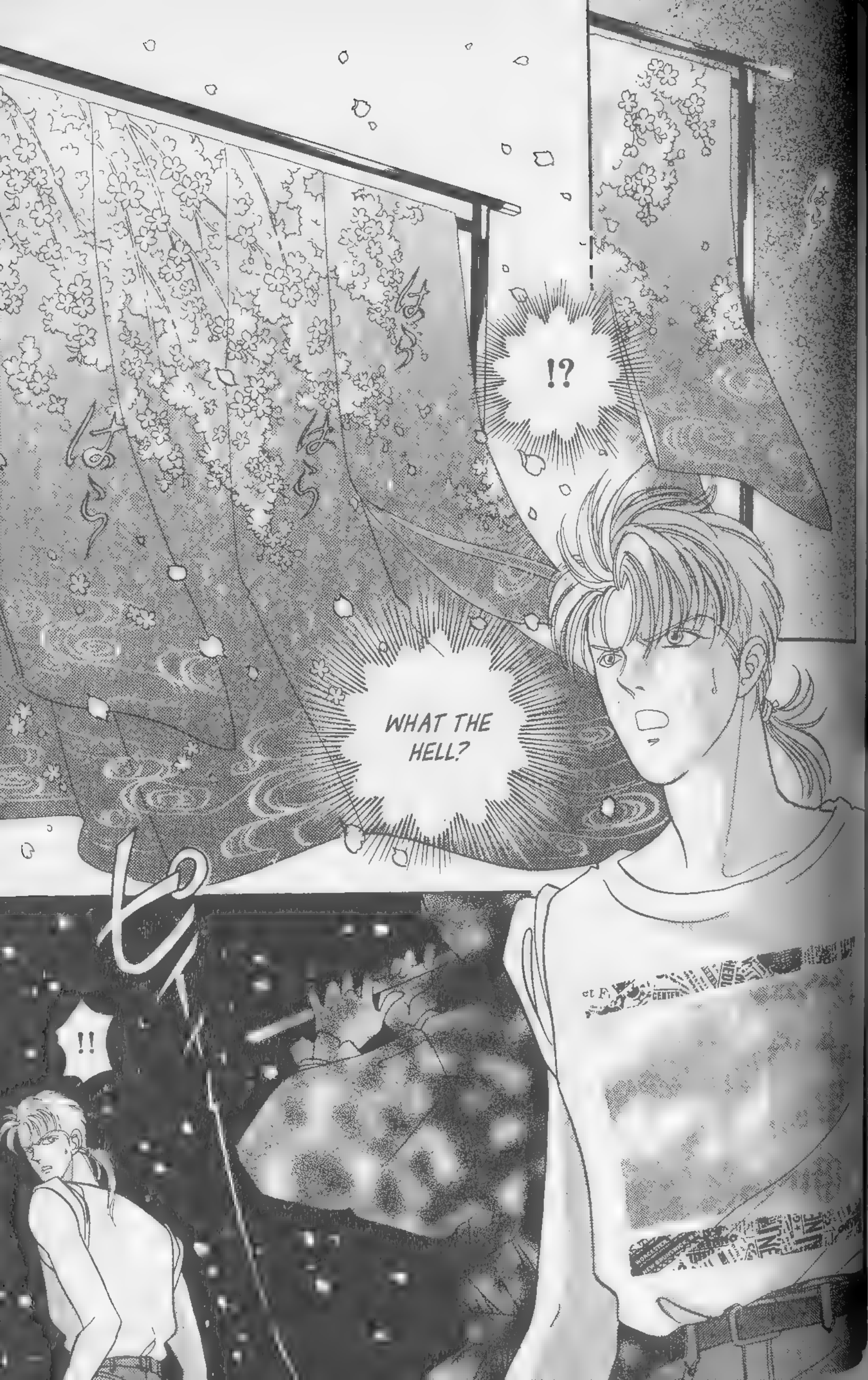

THE DESIGN ON THIS KIMONO... IT'S SAKURA.
SAKURA?
YES, CHERRY BLOSSOMS. THEY BLOOM IN SUMMER. THEY'RE ALSO JAPAN'S NATIONAL FLOWER.
OUT HERE, YOU CAN FIND LOTS OF THEM IN WASHINGTON.
JUST WHAT YOU NEED...ANOTHER DRESS.
Not quite.
WAIT A MINUTE! THEY WEAR THOSE THINGS IN SUMMER-TIME?
I WON'T BE ABLE TO WEAR IT WITHOUT A FEW ALTERATIONS.
THE SLEEVES ARE MUCH TOO SHORT.
I HAVE TO ADMIT, THIS WOULD LOOK VERY PRETTY...ON A GIRL!!!
COUNT, YOU CAN'T SERIOUSLY BE PLANNING TO WEAR THIS!
SEE ALL THESE BRIGHT PINKS? IN ANCIENT TIMES, WHAT THEY USED FOR DYE...
...PARTICULARLY RED DYE...

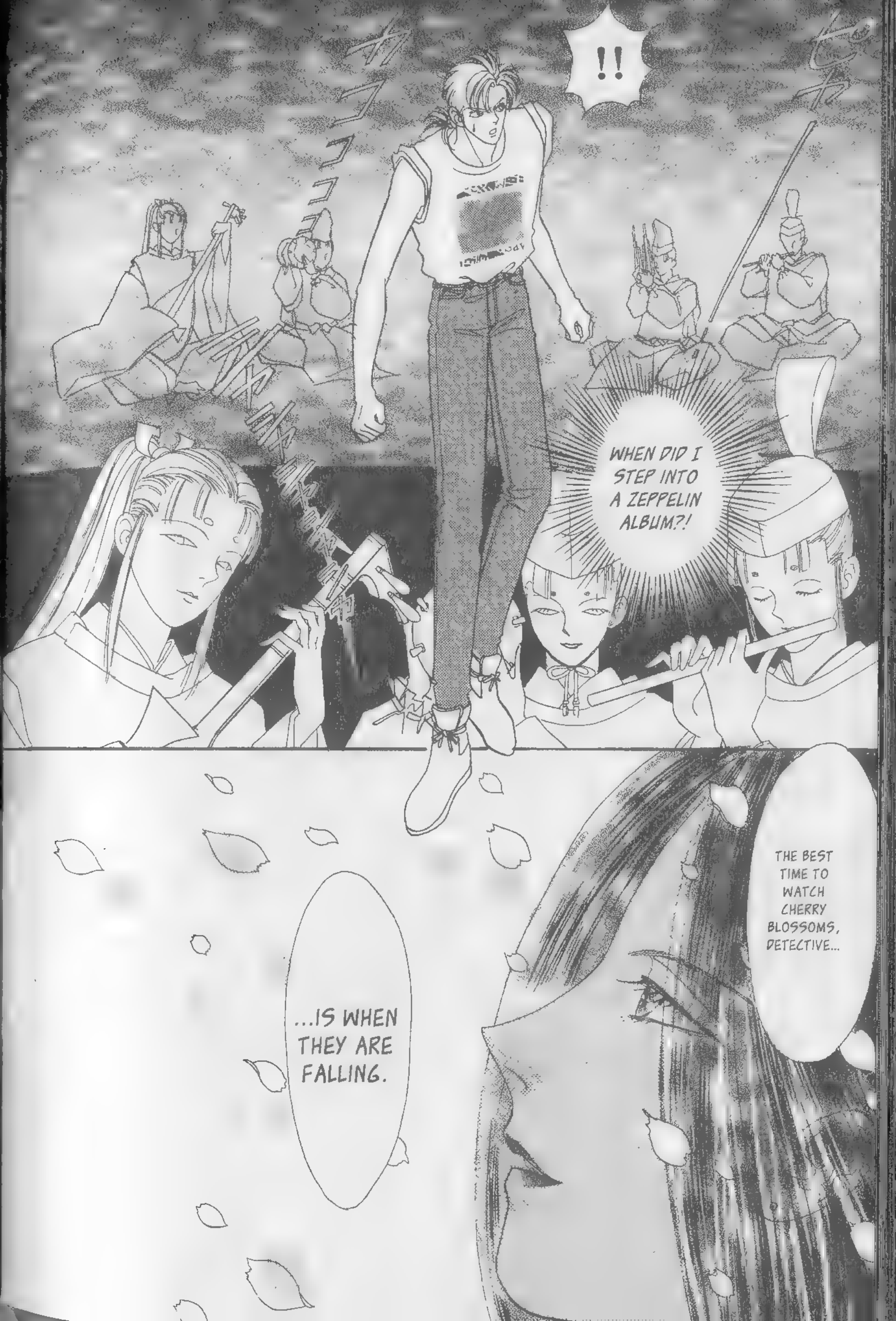

...WAS INSECT BLOOD
ALL THESE BEAUTIFUL COLORS WERE THE RESULT OF HARVESTING MILLIONS OF INSECTS...
...AND DRAINING THEM OF THEIR BLOOD.
ボリ
ポリ
INSECT BLOOD?!
AH! YOU'RE GIVIN' ME THE CREEPS!
LET'S CHANGE THE DAMN SUBJECT ALREADY!
SHIIIT!!
WELL, NOW THAT YOU'VE FINISHED RUMMAGING THROUGH MY PROPERTY, DID YOU FIND ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS?
......
Well, that weird fish-thing probably should be illegal, but it's not...
十
虫
WELL THEN, LET'S HAVE SOME GREEN TEA.
COUNT D
仕徳福山景
NOTNEVE ERNDTLAS

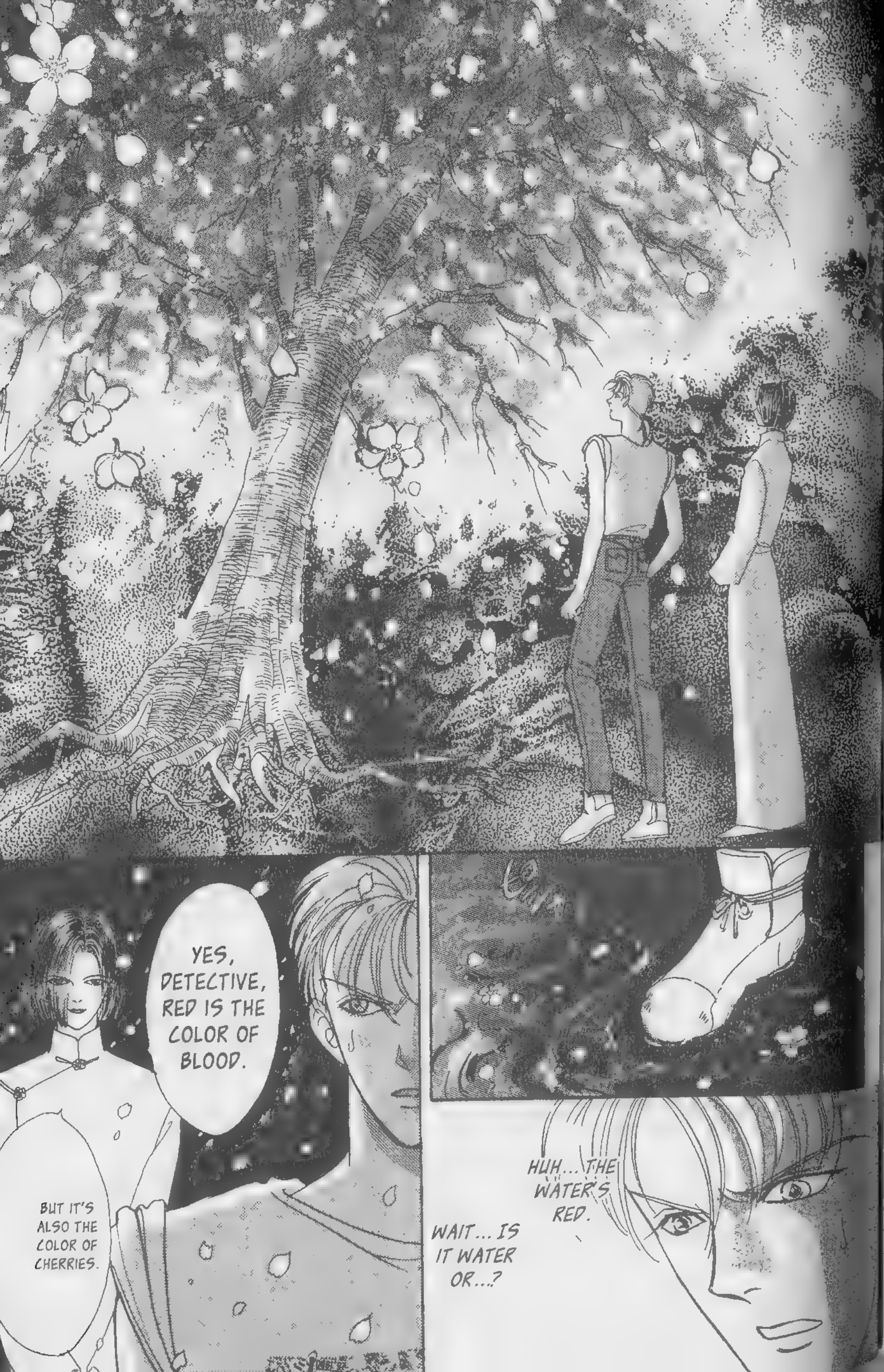

MR. DETECTIVE!
COME ON IN!
WHAT'S WITH THE SUNNY ATTITUDE?
?
I'M TAKING YOU FLOWER-WATCHING TODAY.
FLOWER-WATCHING?
?
?
NOW, NOW...PLAY ALONG.
NOW, COME ON IN.
DON'T FLOWERS USUALLY GROW OUTSIDE?

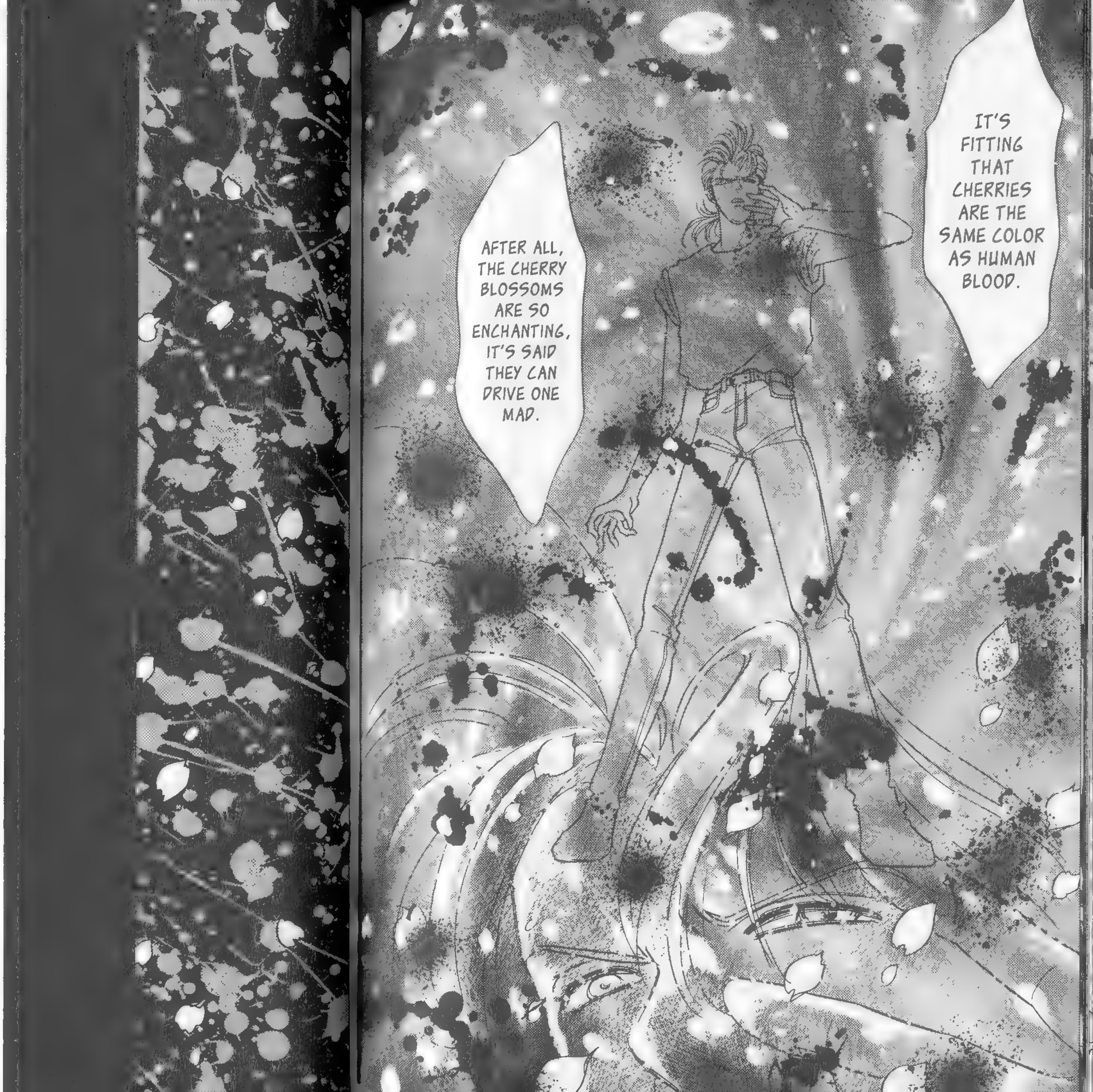

OKAY, EVERYONE ...
CALM DOWN.
IT WON'T BE MUCH LONGER.

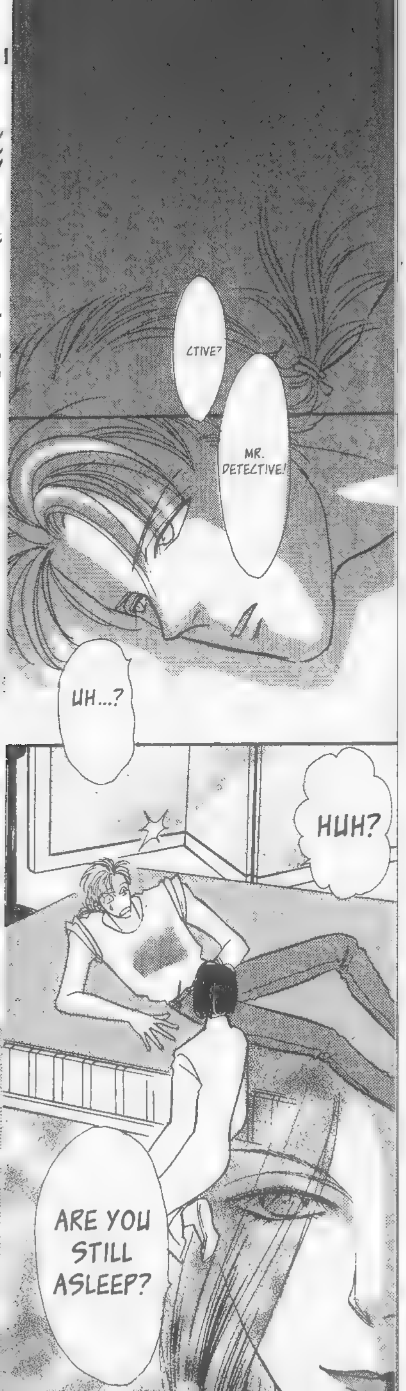

HUH...
THAT'S THE KIMONO, ISN'T IT?
NOW, NOW, HAVE A DRINK.
SAKE? NOW YOU'RE TALKIN', D!
THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED ME TO LOOK AT?
HEY COUNT, DID YOU ADD SOMETHING TO THAT KIMONO? IT LOOKS DIFFERENT THAN IT DID THE LAST TIME I SAW IT.
LIKE THERE'S MORE FLOWERS OR SOMETHING...
QUIET, LEON. JUST WATCH.


!?
WHAT THE HELL?
!!


!!
WHEN DID I STEP INTO A ZEPPELIN ALBUM?!
THE BEST TIME TO WATCH CHERRY BLOSSOMS, DETECTIVE...
...IS WHEN THEY ARE FALLING.


HUH... THE WATER'S RED.
WAIT... IS IT WATER OR...?
YES, DETECTIVE, RED IS THE COLOR OF BLOOD.
BUT IT'S ALSO THE COLOR OF CHERRIES.

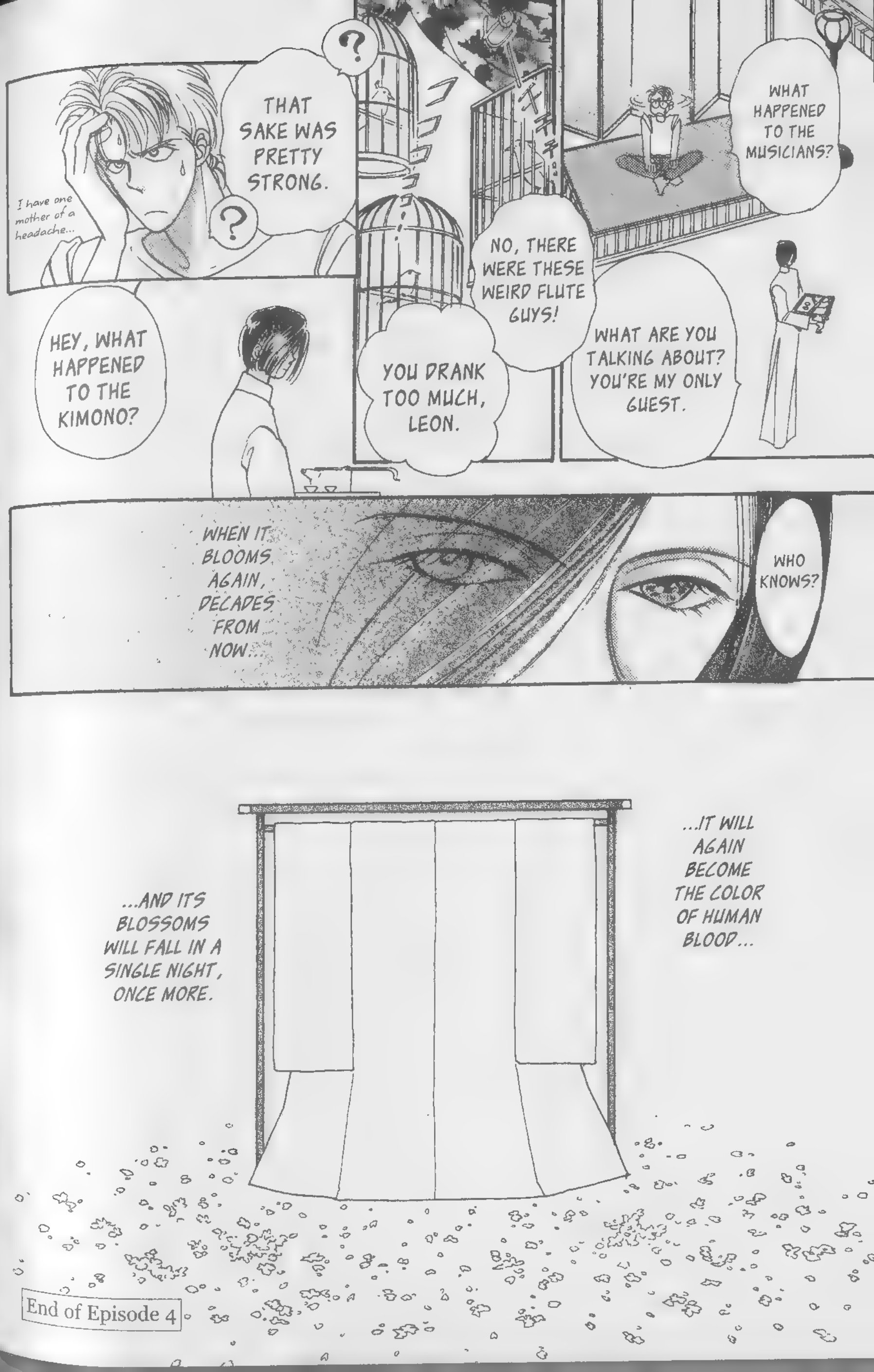

IT'S FITTING THAT CHERRIES ARE THE SAME COLOR AS HUMAN BLOOD.
AFTER ALL, THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS ARE SO ENCHANTING, IT'S SAID THEY CAN DRIVE ONE MAD.


CTIVE?
MR. DETECTIVE!
UH...?
HUH?
ARE YOU STILL ASLEEP?

The Third Flowers and the Detective Story

Sakura

The insect used to make the red dye is the Kaigara, a bug only a few millimeters long. It's wingless. They use female insects, first beheading them and then slowly draining their bodily fluids... Uh, I think I'll stop writing about this, in case any of you are eating dinner.


WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MUSICIANS?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU'RE MY ONLY GUEST.
NO, THERE WERE THESE WEIRD FLUTE GUYS!
YOU DRANK TOO MUCH, LEON.
?
THAT SAKE WAS PRETTY STRONG.
?
I have one mother of a headache...
HEY, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KIMONO?
WHO KNOWS?
WHEN IT BLOOMS AGAIN, DECADES FROM NOW...
...IT WILL AGAIN BECOME THE COLOR OF HUMAN BLOOD...
...AND ITS BLOSSOMS WILL FALL IN A SINGLE NIGHT, ONCE MORE.

End of Episode 4

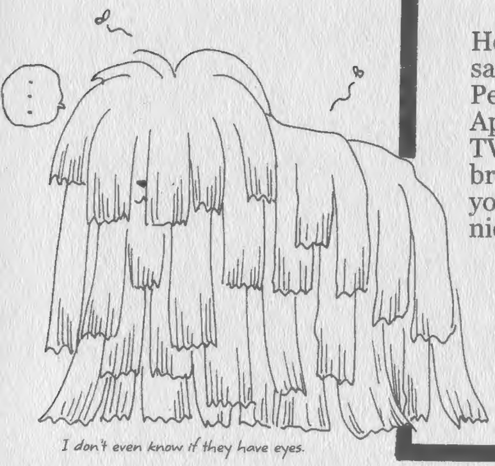
Titicaca Orestias

A freshwater fish, native to Peru, that lives in South America's highest lake. "Orestias" means "Mountain Spirit" in Greek. The Indians used to fish for and eat orestias, but in 1937 Americans brought trout to Lake Titicaca. These trout exhausted the lake's food supply, and by 1950 the orestias were extinct.

I did some research on anti-government guerilla organizations in Peru, but at the time of this writing (October '96), the "Tupac Amaru" aren't getting as much attention in Peru as they once did. The other major group is the "Shining Path." Remember that, kiddies, there WILL be a quiz later.

Lhasa Apso

Here's the Phantom Dog from the same family as the Shi Tzu and the Pekingese! I saw a genuine Lhasa Apso raised by a priest on an NHK TV special. Looked like a raggy broom or a mop. So apparently, you get closer to the gods by having nicely swept floors.

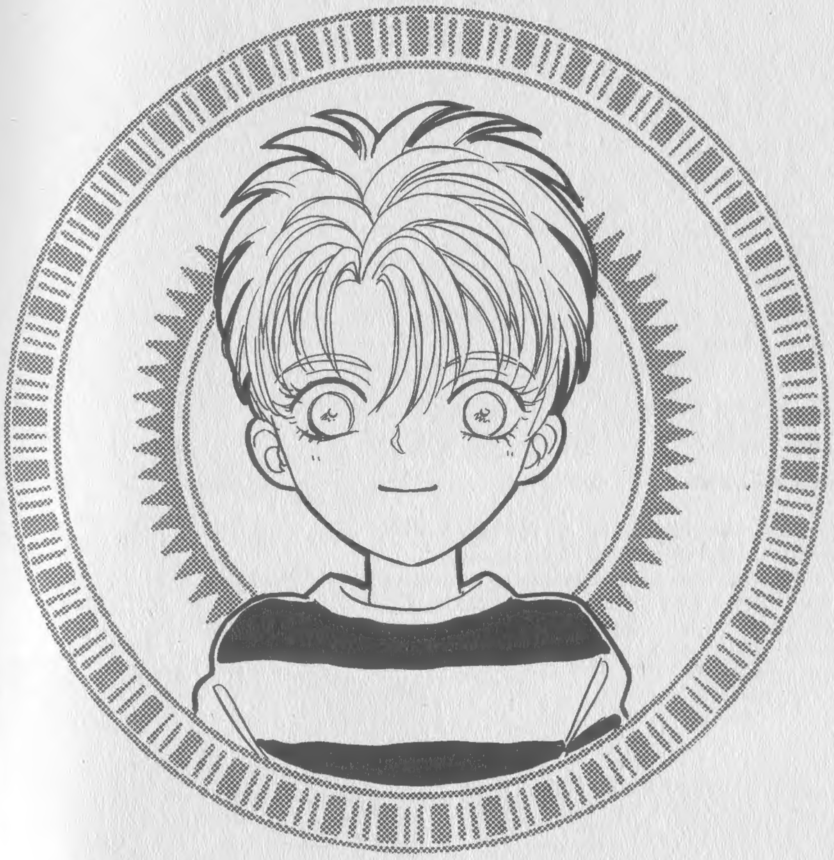


There's a 5 cm tail hidden under all that.

I don't even know if they have eyes.

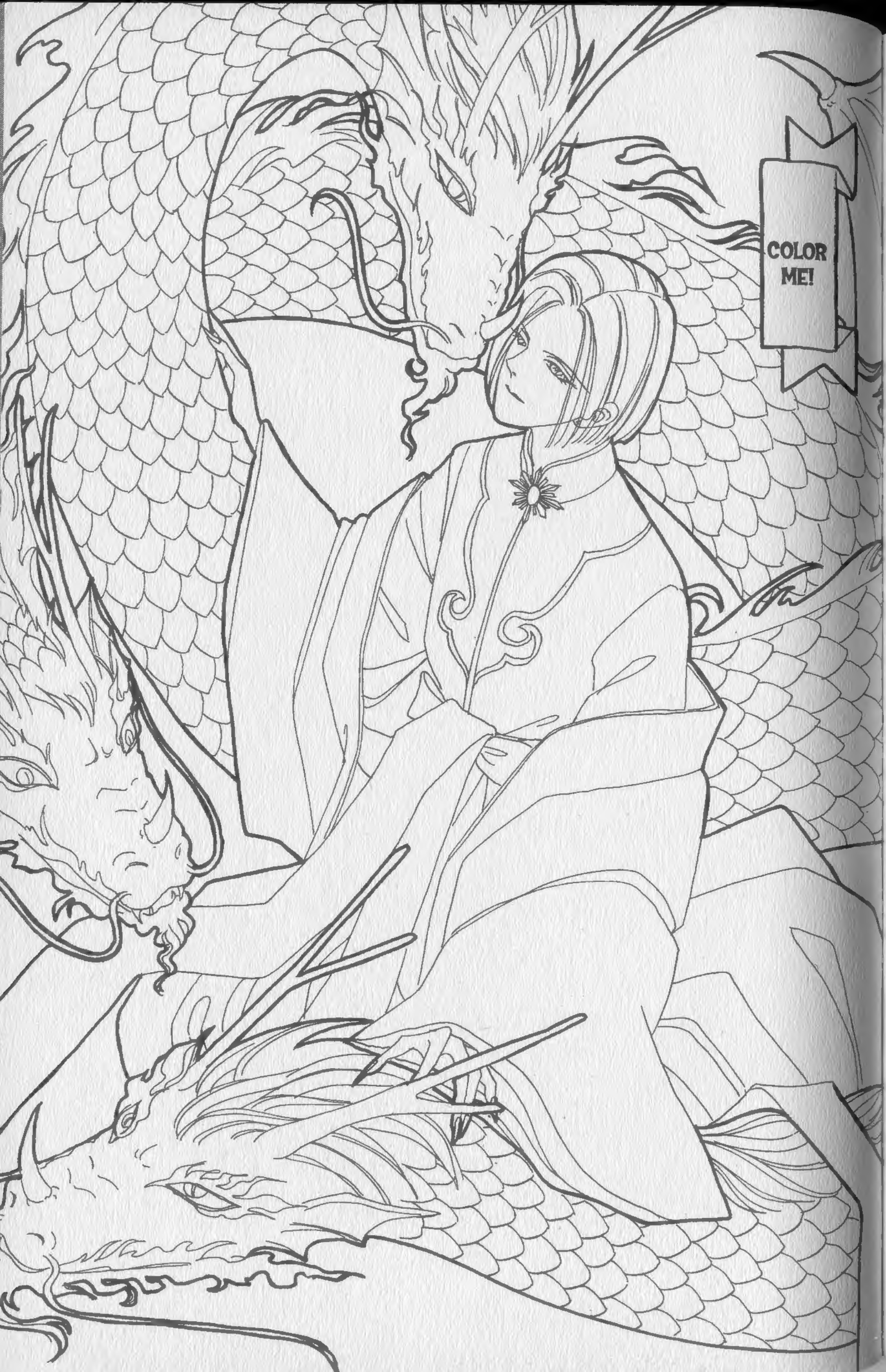
PET CATALOG

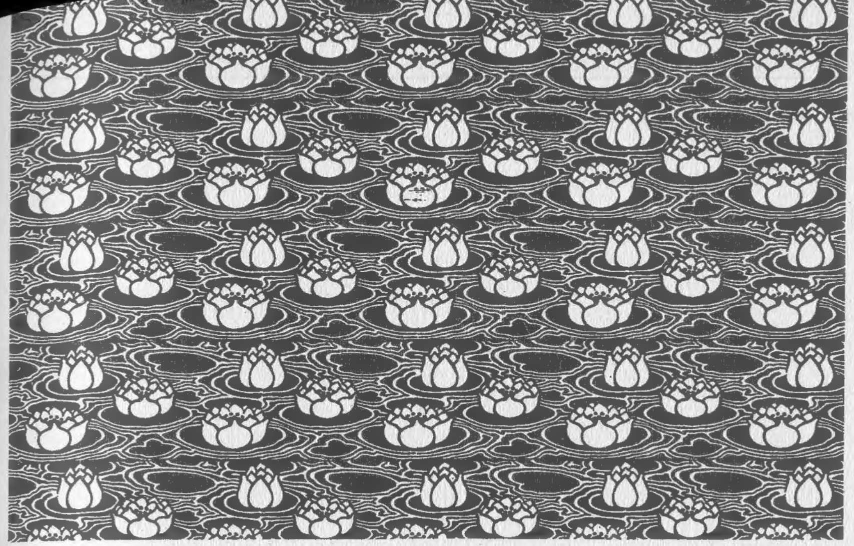
No.6



Christopher Orcot

Age: 6
Height: Short
Weight: Light
Personality: Cheerful and innocent, but a bit of a crybaby

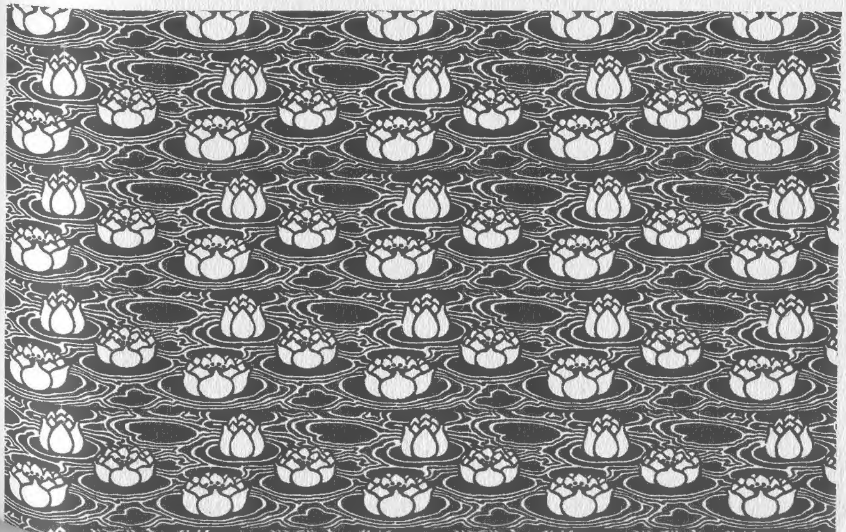




KING GIDORA

Introduced in Volume 2, this dragon was born with three heads. I chose to portray it as a girl with three distinct personalities.

To the left here is my original cover for this volume. Glad I didn't throw it out!



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Pet Shop of Horrors™

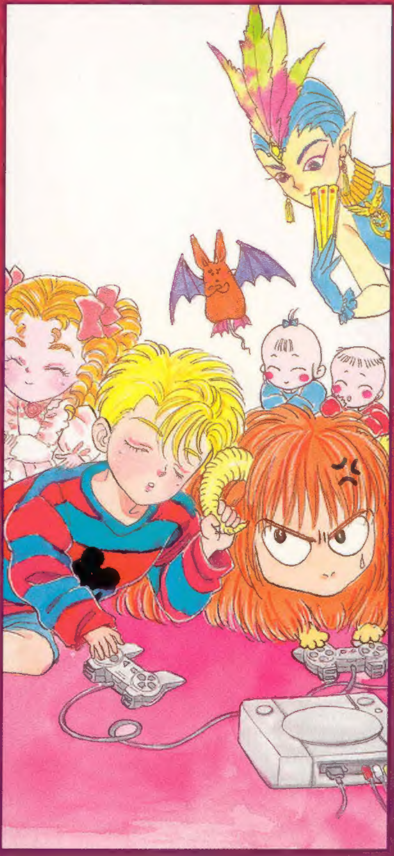
Welcome to Chinatown! During your visit, be sure to stop by Count D's pet shop, where love and dreams are sold in the form of exotic animals. But animals, as you know, have a tendency to get out of control...

DISCOVERY: When Count D and Leon are abducted by terrorists, freedom comes in the form of a mystical jaguar.

DECEMBER: 'Twas the night before Christmas, and under the house, a creature was stirring, far worse than a mouse.

DISTANCE: The youngest daughter in a family of musicians has no talent. Will a new pet sweeten her tune or make her sing the blues?

This volume also contains a "Flowers and the Detective" side story.



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6

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